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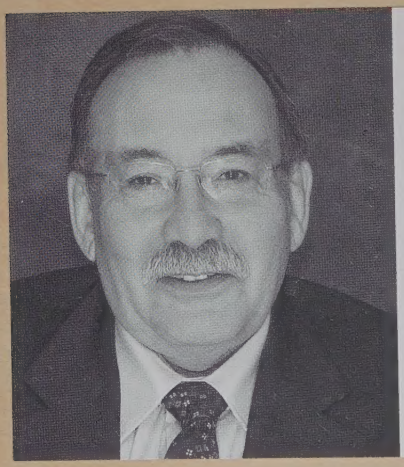

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SIR WILFRID LAURIER AND THE LIBERAL PARTY

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SIR WILFRID LAURIER

AND THE

LIBERAL PARTY

2530

A POLITICAL HISTORY

BY J. S. WILLISON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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CHAPTER XVII

2530

A CONTRAST IN LEADERSHIP

AT two o'clock in the morning of April 28th, 1880, the House of Commons received an important communication. The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie rose just before adjournment and announced that he had determined to withdraw from the position of leader of the Opposition, and henceforth would speak and act only for himself. It was a thin House which received this unexpected statement, and for a moment dead silence rested over the Chamber. Then the leader of the Government, who must always be ready with the timely word and the fitting counsel, rose and said: "Of course we on this side of the House have nothing to say to such a decision. I hope the honourable gentleman who takes the place of the honourable member for Lambton, and his party, will display the same ability, earnestness, and zeal for what he thinks and believes to be for the good of the country as have been displayed by my honourable friend who has just taken his seat." There was a murmur of sympathetic applause, the House rose, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Leonard Tilley crossed the floor, and with grave kindliness expressed their regret at Mr. Mackenzie's withdrawal, while the press

correspondents hurried down from the gallery to put upon the wires the fact of Mr. Mackenzie's resignation, and the circumstances under which his decision was communicated to Parliament. "There was," said a Conservative writer of the time, "a certain sadness about the act of Mr. Mackenzie's resignation of his seat as leader of the Opposition. It was two o'clock in the morning. The House was weary. The members had all fled save the small band that usually remains on each side to the end; and at that hour, to that audience, and in a tone which witnessed some degree of suffering, Mr. Mackenzie communicated his resolve. We quite understand the ready natural kindness of Sir John Macdonald's reply. Statesmen seldom fail to regret the partial or total eclipse of foemen worthy of their steel; and as leader of the Opposition Mr. Mackenzie has proved himself in former, as well as in present times, a foeman worthy of any man's steel."

Mr. Mackenzie's statement was unexpected; yet for many months rumour had been busy with the name of Mr. Edward Blake in connection with the Liberal leadership, and there was a general impression in the country that a change was impending. In fact, many Liberal journals had openly advocated the appointment of Mr. Blake in the event of Mr. Mackenzie's resignation, while Mr. Mackenzie's parliamentary associates knew that his health was failing, and that he must soon prove

physically unequal to the cares, burdens, and responsibilities of the office. Owing chiefly to absence from the country, Mr. Blake was defeated in South Bruce at the general election of 1878; but through the resignation of Mr. Burk a vacancy was created in West Durham, and in the autumn of 1879 he returned to Parliament as the representative of that constituency. It was thought when this vacancy was created for Mr. Blake that an immediate change in the leadership was contemplated. For many months the Conservative press had hinted at a conspiracy to depose Mr. Mackenzie in revenge for the defeat of the party under his premiership.[1] But Mr. Mackenzie served as leader during all of 1879, and as we have seen, until the closing days of the session of 1880.

There was ground, however, for the suspicion that his leadership had become unsatisfactory to the Liberal parliamentary party. Not once during the session of 1880 had he met his followers in council. This was resented by the parliamentary contingent; and as prorogation approached, dissatisfaction increased, and the demand for a caucus became irresistible. Mr. Mackenzie, however, was inexorable; and when at length a caucus was called for April 29th, the invitations were issued by the Liberal whip without the sanction of the party leader. On the eve of this meeting Mr. Mackenzie

[1] "Mr. Blake's title to his place therefore is necessity; to talk of intrigue is senseless."—*The Bystander*, April, 1881, page 172.

announced his resignation in Parliament. It is significant that he did not make his communication to caucus. As leader of the Opposition he had no official status in the House of Commons. It is even more significant that his statement to Parliament was the first intimation his Liberal associates received that he had determined to withdraw from the leadership. For many years his relations with Mr. Blake were not entirely cordial, and there is no doubt he was firmly persuaded that in office he had received from Mr. Blake only a hesitating and intermittent support. There is on record a letter written by Mr. Mackenzie some months before the fall of his Government, in which he said: "From the first I was more willing to serve than to reign, and would even now be gladly relieved from a position the toils of which no man can appreciate who has not had the experience. I pressed Mr. Blake in November, 1874, to take the lead, and last winter I again urged him to do so, and this summer I offered to go out altogether, or serve under him, as he might deem best in the general interest."[1] But though Mr. Blake would not accept the leadership in 1874, nor the office of Prime Minister, in Mr. Mackenzie's stead, in 1877, he now accepted the appointment from the party caucus which met on the morning after Mr. Mackenzie announced his resignation in Parlia-

[1] The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, His Life and Times, by William Buckingham and the Hon. Geo. W. Ross, page 502.

ment. It may be that Mr. Mackenzie was convinced that the question of the leadership would arise in the caucus, and that as differences of opinion would surely develop, his resignation would subserve his own independence and dignity, and leave the caucus free to make its decision. It is certain, however, that he did not recognize his own increasing physical infirmity, and was not at the moment favourable to Mr. Blake's appointment to the party leadership. In fact, from the moment that he announced his resignation in Parliament until the day of his death, Mr. Mackenzie never entered a Liberal caucus. It is also the fact that then and ever afterward he was unfitted by physical weakness for severe or sustained political effort.

Mr. Blake's position was one of exceeding delicacy and difficulty. It was impossible for Mr. Mackenzie to resume the leadership, and under all the circumstances it was hard for Mr. Blake to accept the office. But the caucus was absolutely unanimous for Mr. Blake; the temper and interests of the party seemed to demand his acceptance; and at length he sacrificed his personal judgment, faced certain misunderstanding and misrepresentation, and took upon his shoulders the leadership of a remnant in the House of Commons, and a broken party in the country.

It was not Mr. Blake's fortune to lead the Liberal party back to office; but no one who examines the record will deny that he profoundly

influenced the deliberations of Parliament, and contributed greatly to the maintenance of a sane opinion and a sound moral temper in the country. Mr. Blake has the mind and the genius of a great administrator. It may be that he is not so well equipped for the part of a leader in Opposition. In truth it seems an ill caprice of fortune which set this managing and governing mind to a long warfare in Opposition in Canada, and to a far less hopeful struggle for a weak and unpopular cause in the Imperial Parliament. It is doubtful if this continent has bred a more opulent mind than that of Edward Blake. He ranks with Webster and Hamilton and Beecher. His very first appearances in the courts gave the impression of great intellectual power and of phenomenal industry. His brief term of office in Ontario revealed political talent and administrative capacity of the first order. Throughout the stormy days of the Pacific scandal his voice rang through the country, and his stern arraignment of Sir John Macdonald in the great debate which closed with the Conservative leader's resignation of office in November, 1873, is one of the most overwhelming speeches ever delivered in the Canadian Parliament. That and many of his later speeches would take high rank in any Parliament in the world.

Mr. Blake held office in the Mackenzie Administration, and under his direction important steps were taken in the assertion of the self-governing rights of Canada. His was the measure which

demanded for the Canadian Parliament the authority to pass upon the legislation of the Home Government respecting the extradition of criminals in so far as such legislation affected Canada. He successfully asserted the right of Canada to make independent extradition arrangements with the United States. Through negotiation with the Colonial Office he secured a revision of the instructions to the Governor-General, by which that Imperial officer was shorn of independent authority and made the obedient mouthpiece of the Canadian Ministry on all questions other than those of Imperial concern. The Mackenzie Government, in negotiating the Brown Reciprocity Treaty and in the Fisheries Arbitration, had persuaded the Home authorities to give Canada direct representation on the Imperial Commissions. Later, as leader of the Opposition, Mr. Blake contended for the right of Canada to negotiate her own commercial treaties. In fact, the assertion of the full self-governing power of Canada was the dominant note of Mr. Blake's work as a federal Minister and as leader of the Liberal party, and it is interesting to speculate how the relations between Canada and the Mother Country would have developed if he had become the head of a Canadian Cabinet. He is a Federalist rather than an Imperialist, and in any plan of federation he would very clearly assert the positive political equality of the colonies. Not once during the years that he has sat in the Imperial Parliament has he broken silence

with the language of Imperialism. If he touches such questions at all, it is to suggest the theory of autonomous kingdoms for Ireland and the colonies rather than a great central Parliament vested with authority over the widely-separated parts of the far-spreading British Empire.

Mr. Blake was in poor health, and so was not at his best during the term of the Mackenzie Government. He seemed to lack heartiness for his work and to be sparing of his public services. In 1873, he joined the Cabinet as Minister without portfolio; he withdrew from the Government in 1874, he became Minister of Justice in 1875, resigned that office in September, 1877, to accept the Presidency of the Council, and early in 1878, again withdrew from the Cabinet. With his subsequent election to the Liberal leadership began his great struggle with Sir John Macdonald for the first place in the confidence of the people of Canada. History must condemn the redistribution measure of 1882, but even under more equal conditions Sir John Macdonald would have won that election. Business was good in older Canada, the North-West was passing through a remarkable period of inflation and speculation, and all over the country protection seemed justified of its works. A great expansion of manufacturing industry and an abounding commercial and industrial prosperity united the staple interests of the country in support of the new fiscal policy, and in the face of these conditions Sir John Mac-

donald was invincible. But the mass of Liberals had an exuberant faith in Mr. Blake, and they learned with something like a shock that he had not summarily unhorsed Sir John Macdonald in the Dominion as he had summarily overthrown John Sandfield Macdonald in Ontario. It was unfortunate for Mr. Blake that more was expected of him than mortal man could hope to achieve.

Mr. Blake's failure in 1887 was due to the strenuous hostility of the protectionist manufacturers, to lavish promises of public works by the Administration, and to the deep feeling excited by the North-West Rebellion. The protectionists were determined to keep the tariff in the hands of Sir John Macdonald, and even many manufacturers who still maintained a nervous connection with the Liberal party, were profoundly uneasy at the prospect of revolutionary tariff changes. Mr. Blake's own utterances gave slight ground for apprehension. But it may be admitted in justice to the excited protectionists, that some of his parliamentary supporters and many of the Liberal journals maintained an attitude of stern and uncompromising hostility to the whole protectionist system, and persistently denounced the extremer protectionist features of the existing tariff. This gave the protected manufacturers their ground of quarrel with Mr. Blake, and closed the ears of a very powerful element in the community to all appeal and all argument upon other vital questions of public

concern. Mr. Blake's own position on the tariff is clearly expressed in his address to the electors of West Durham in 1882. He then said: "You know well that I do not approve of needless restrictions on our liberty of exchanging what we have for what we want, and do not see that any substantial application of the restrictive principle has been, or can be, made in favour of the great interests of the mechanic, the labourer, the farmer, the lumberman, the shipbuilder, or the fisherman. But you know also that I have fully recognized the fact that we are obliged to raise yearly a great sum, made greater by the obligations imposed on us by this Government; and that we must continue to provide this yearly sum mainly by import duties, laid to a large extent on goods similar to those which can be manufactured here; and that it results as a necessary incident of our settled fiscal system that there must be a large, and as I believe, in the view of moderate protectionists, an ample advantage to the home manufacturer. Our adversaries wish to present to you an issue as between the present tariff and absolute free trade. That is not the true issue. Free trade is, as I have repeatedly explained, for us impossible; and the issue is whether the present tariff is perfect, or defective and unjust."

Early in the campaign of 1887, he repeated this declaration of policy, and professed, doubtless upon adequate authority, to speak also for Sir Richard Cartwright. In fact, it is understood that he spoke

after full consultation with the chief men of the party, and voiced the reasoned and deliberate judgment of himself and his parliamentary associates. He said: "No man, I care not how convinced an advocate of absolute free trade for Canada he may be, has yet suggested, no man I believe can suggest, a practicable plan whereby our great revenue needs can be met, otherwise than by the continued imposition of very high duties on goods similar to those we make, or can make, within our bounds, or on the raw material. I invite the most ardent free trader in public life to present a plausible solution of this problem, and I contend that he is bound to do so before he talks of free trade as practicable in Canada. I have not believed it soluble in my day, and any chance of its solubility, if any chance there were, has been destroyed by the vast increase of our yearly charge, and by the other conditions which have been created. The thing is removed from the domain of practical politics."[1]

But the organized protectionists could not be conciliated. They fought as desperately for Sir John Macdonald as in 1882, and their influence in many constituencies was decisive. Then the Government's faulty, feeble and even corrupt administration of the affairs of the North-West was enmeshed in the execution of Riel and the Nationalist agitation in Quebec. In the general estimation of the English

[1] From a speech by Mr. Blake at Malvern in East York, January 22nd, 1887.

provinces, Riel was a plotter, an adventurer, if not a murderer, and behind his turbulent figure stood the martyred Scott. The inflammatory utterances of Quebec Nationalists fed the fires of racial bigotry in Ontario. In consequence, the enthusiasm of many thousands of Liberals was checked, and probably many votes that Mr. Blake would have received under other circumstances, were not polled or were given to Conservative candidates.

But though Mr. Blake fought in the teeth of public sentiment, he fought magnificently. There is nothing in the political literature of Canada, if we except his own speeches against the bargain with the Canadian Pacific Syndicate, equal to his great series of addresses in Parliament and in the country on the execution of Riel and the mismanagement of North-West affairs by the Macdonald Government. His voice was heard in every constituency in Ontario, and at many points in Quebec; but while he forced a sullen recognition of his great powers from the most venomous and inveterate of opponents, he could not overcome the prejudice and sentiment of the country. Then the Liberal treasury was empty. There was no party fund even for legitimate expenses, while his adversaries, as later events have shown, distributed an enormous campaign fund throughout the country. Besides, Mr. Blake had strongly antagonized the Orange Association, a great political force in Canada, and its lodges, naturally enough, laboured with untiring

zeal to accomplish his defeat; while his strong and eloquent championship of the cause of Catholic Ireland brought no corresponding political advantage. It may be doubted if home rule for Ireland is a legitimate issue in the affairs of Canada; but there can be no doubt that Mr. Blake, by devoting his time, fortune, and intellect to that cause, has proved his sincere attachment to the movement for Irish self-government.

Mr. Blake felt this second defeat keenly, and towards the close of the parliamentary session of 1887, with energy exhausted and health impaired, resigned the leadership of the Liberal party, and at the general election of 1891 did not seek re-election to the Canadian Parliament. A year later he accepted a seat in the Imperial Parliament as the Irish member for South Longford.

Now and then one may hear the shallow remark that Mr. Blake was a failure in Canada. The truth is that on almost every great question of public policy time has justified his position. On land policy and railway policy he saw beyond his time, and the future holds for him a still ampler vindication. In his gospel of generous dealing with French and Catholic he was a patriot and a prophet. In his Spartan integrity he gave us a noble example of the best type of British statesmanship. He was austere. We thought him cold. We felt in Sir John Macdonald the kinship of a common humanity. Mr. Blake seemed to be always "on the

side of the angels." Smaller men felt sometimes that his imperious mind betrayed itself in intellectual impatience, if not in intellectual arrogance. We knew that he had Gladstone's moral elevation, but were not so sure that he had Gladstone's moral enthusiasm. We did not understand that in the one the enthusiasm was displayed, in the other concealed. A master of parliamentary strategy and a very giant in political combat, he still could not get so close to the people as his great rival. He could not make a worshipper here by a shrug of the shoulders, there by a shake of the hand, yonder by a skilful word that would penetrate to the very core of a man's self-esteem. As ambitious as Sir John Macdonald, he did not seem to confess it so frankly, and many a time his towering ability was checkmated by the simple manifestation of Sir John Macdonald's humanity.

As a speaker Mr. Blake has remarkable force and fluency. He is, perhaps, too exhaustive, and prone to over-preparation and over-elaboration. He cannot overlook a point or abridge any branch of an argument, and the characteristics which mark his work before the courts also distinguish his addresses to Parliament and from the platform. It was said that as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons he left nothing to his lieutenants, and that he undertook the condensation and presentation of a mass of detail that could have been safely committed to other hands. There is

point in the criticism. This is something which must be learned by the leaders in every field, and if Mr. Blake had been able to distribute the work and responsibilities of the leadership, he would have borne better the physical strain of his political labours. Then, he seemed to speak under a sense of restraint, and with a check-rein upon his emotions. He has a keen and searching wit, at times a thoroughly happy humour, but he used it sparingly. He has a remarkable power to rouse men and send their blood leaping and plunging, but as a rule he confined himself to calm, restrained, deliberate argument. He persuaded to conviction rather than stimulated to enthusiasm. He seemed determined to win men by their reason and to spare their emotions, to show always the temper of the statesman and never that of the agitator. This was admirable, but sometimes it was not politics.

Once, at least, in the House of Commons he slipped the rein, and the incident has never been forgotten. During the memorable struggle over the Franchise bill, the House had sat without rising from three o'clock on Thursday until midnight on Saturday. The Government knew that Mr. Blake would not speak for even five minutes into Sunday morning, and it was determined that he should not be allowed to close the debate. Mr. Foster spoke at length, and was followed by Sir John Macdonald who held the floor until five minutes to twelve o'clock, and then sat down,

amid the cheering of the delighted Ministerialists. But Mr. Blake jumped to his feet and filled the five minutes at his command with fiery eloquence and swift denunciation of the tactics of the Government, crowded columns into sentences, gave himself utterly to the fervour of the moment, and at the stroke of twelve dropped into his seat amid such a tempest of cheering and enthusiasm as Parliament has rarely witnessed.[1] It was a wonderful performance, and it was a rare delight to see this great, calm, pitiless logician quite abandoned to human passions and emotions. It was seldom that we saw him thus. The picture we know best is that of a man of giant frame and serious aspect, towering and impressive, facing a great meeting, pouring out a stream of severe, classic English, broken into sentences of many parts and of curious complexity, but never obscure or incomplete, driving home his argument, piling proof upon proof and fact upon fact, now rising into noble eloquence, now stern with reproof, now big with counsel and prophecy, seeming always to stand as one discharging a solemn responsibility and holding to as solemn account the people who must determine the issue of the contest.[2]

[1] Hansard, May 2nd, 1885, pages 1564, 1565.

[2] "Mr. Blake, were he a man of ordinary force, would hardly deserve the name of an orator. The greatest, the most essential gift for an orator is force, and this he has in the highest degree. . . . Mr. Blake's intellect is strong, well equipped, quick. His mastery of facts is astonishing. He is hardly so successful when he deals with figures.

Mr. Blake's eminence in Canada was undisputed, and although an Irish member and a colonist, both disadvantages at Westminster, he has won his way to an honourable position in the Imperial Parliament. His was the determining voice that made Oliver Mowat Prime Minister of Ontario, and Wilfrid Laurier leader of the Liberal party of Canada. In each case his judgment was triumphantly vindicated.[1]

Formidable as was the man whom Mr. Laurier succeeded as leader of the Opposition, not less formidable was the man whom he confronted as leader of the Government. Sir John Macdonald was then serving his fourth term as Prime Minister, and for more than thirty years he had sat in either the Parliament of United Canada or the federal House of Commons. He had great faults and great qualities. His faults had their chief manifestation in his election methods, while his greater qualities had their best expression in his wide national outlook, in his sympathetic management of diverse racial and

His command of language leaves little to be desired for immediate effectiveness. But there is a total absence of literary tissue in his speeches, and there being nothing to relieve the excellent monotony, they are not easy reading—and how speeches will read has become an important question in modern times."—Nicholas Flood Davin in the *Canadian Monthly* for March, 1881.

[1] Parts of this study of the Hon. Edward Blake appeared in the *Canadian Magazine* for November, 1897, in an article entitled "Premiers of Ontario since Confederation" and are now incorporated in these volumes with the permission of the editor, Mr. John A. Cooper.

sectarian elements, and in his judicious recognition of popular sympathies and even of national prejudices as agencies for the consolidation of the Dominion. There is no doubt that he loved power for its own sake. It was possibly his deliberate conviction that his ideals of policy and methods of administration were essential to the progress and stability of the country. Sir Hugh Allan's enormous contributions to the Conservative campaign fund in 1872, and the heavy assessments made upon public contractors in order to meet the financial necessities of the campaign of 1887, furnish startling evidence of the extent to which direct bribery was practised in behalf of Conservative candidates, and of the strength of Sir John Macdonald's determination to maintain at all costs his political ascendancy.[1] Unfortunately, it cannot be shown that the record of the Liberal party was spotless; and while we know that Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Blake discouraged the use of improper influences in elections, many Liberal candidates did not shrink from illegal expenditures, and occasional judicial exposures of Liberal

[1] Sir Hugh Allan's contributions to the Conservative campaign fund in 1872 exceeded $350,000. It was shown by documents published by the Toronto *Globe* and afterwards made the ground of charges against Conservative Ministers, that in 1887 over $100,000 drawn from public contractors and from persons interested in railway subsidies, were distributed in twenty-two constituencies in the Quebec district. It was established by investigation into the charges made by Mr. Tarte in 1891 against Sir Hector Langevin and Mr. Thos. McGreevy, M.P. for Quebec West, that $119,000 were contributed by one firm of contractors to the election expenses of Ministers and their candidates.

corruption materially weakened the attack upon the electoral methods of Sir John Macdonald and his associates. In truth, electoral bribery seems to be ingrained in American institutions, if not in democratic institutions the world over, and with every extension of the franchise the area of corruption widens. Bribery of the individual voter, bribery of constituencies by promises of railways and public buildings, and bribery of provinces by timely rearrangements of the financial terms of Confederation all obtained under the régime of Sir John Macdonald; and if he did not originate, he at least did something to perpetuate and establish, these deep-seated evils in our politics. A still sterner judgment must be passed upon the Redistribution Act of 1882, and the Franchise Act of 1885. These were bold and direct attempts to use the power of a parliamentary majority to stifle public opinion and destroy freedom of elections, and stand in direct conflict with his earlier and higher ideals. He took advantage of the violence of political controversy, and the fear of the manufacturing and financial interests that the protectionist system would be prematurely disturbed, to pass legislation that would not have been tolerated under freer and saner conditions of opinion, and which fatally handicapped the Liberal leaders in successive general elections.

Sir John Macdonald was neither a popular orator nor a parliamentary debater of the first order.[1] He

[1] "Sir John Macdonald is a type of politician which has never failed

was, however, a profound student of character. He had humour, adaptiveness, and readiness. He could break the force of an attack with a story or an epigram. He had that mysterious quality of personal magnetism which gives to its fortunate possessors a strange and mighty power over their kind. During the last four or five years of his life, his seat in Parliament was often vacant. He nursed his strength and avoided so far as possible the worry and fatigue of late night sittings. It was his habit to sit with

to delight the English people—the man who, like Palmerston, can work hard, do strong things, hold his purpose, never lose sight for a moment of the honour and welfare of his country, and yet crack his joke and have his laugh, full of courage and good spirits and kindly fun. . . Sir John Macdonald in the English House of Commons would have been equal, in my opinion, to Mr. Disraeli in finesse, in the art of forming combinations and managing men. He never could have equalled him in invective, or in epigram, or in force as an orator. Sir John Macdonald brings up his artillery with more ease. He is always human, even in his attacks. Lord Beaconsfield, as Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons, approached his opponent like some serpentine monster, coiled himself ruthlessly round him, fascinated with his gaze, and struck out with venomed fang. But Sir John is probably the better debater of the two. His delivery is lively, natural, mercurial; Lord Beaconsfield's is laboured. The power of making a statement is not the forte of the author of "Endymion." Sir John Macdonald makes a luminous statement, and his reasoning faculty is at least as high as Lord Beaconsfield's. He has very little, comparatively, of the latter's *curiosa felicitas* in coining phrases, but his humour is more spontaneous. Lord Beaconsfield has the charm which is inseparable from genius, but it may well be doubted if his power of conciliating men and fixing their affections surpasses that of the Prime Minister of the Dominion. I am sure that in sober strong sense the balance is in favour of the Canadian statesman. There is nothing viewy about Sir John Macdonald. Though a man of imagination, reason is lord every time."—Nicholas Flood Davin, in the *Canadian Monthly* for March, 1881.

his legs crossed and his head thrown back, with a jaunty air and an alert look, except now and then when some keen debater across the floor was pressing him hard, dealing square, strong blows at "the old man and the old policy," with perhaps a touch of bitterness in the words, and a keen knowledge of the old man's ways revealed in the method of attack. At such times he would move uneasily as the enemy pressed him close, toss his head, bite his lips, glance angrily back upon his followers, throw some taunt to his opponents, and at last come to his feet and retort upon the adversary. In later years he rarely lost his complete self-control. In his angriest mood he was deliberate, and seemed as he faced his opponents to be coolly and craftily seeking for the weak spots in the indictment. He did not always meet argument with argument. He had little eloquence. He had no loftiness of speech. He never sought to cover the whole ground of an opponent's attack. That elaboration of argument and exhaustive mastery of detail which distinguished the speeches of Mr. Blake is generally lacking in the speeches of Sir John Macdonald. In Parliament he rarely spoke to convince or win the Opposition. His aim there was to touch the party loyalty and rouse the party enthusiasm of his supporters. He would often turn his back upon the Liberals and address himself directly to the Ministerialists. He would strike some happy thought, some sentence full of keen sarcasm or genial ridicule, and with a shrewd look and

smiling face and jaunty air, would drop the sentence with a shrug of the shoulders and a half-contemptuous gesture that always tickled his followers, and often exasperated his opponents. There he would stand with his back to the Speaker, while the Opposition chafed at the cool but skilful exaggeration of their position, and the Conservatives cheered with delight, and wagged their heads and shrugged their shoulders in sympathy with the old man's bantering humour.

He would pass one of Mr. Blake's most powerful arraignments of his policy with a shrug and a story that perhaps had grown old in his service. He would meet one of Sir Richard Cartwright's most scathing exposures of the tendencies and results of his rule and methods with a smile for his followers and a jocular reminder for his opponents that the country had heard these arguments, and he was still in office. His relations with Mr. Laurier were always cordial. He seemed to appreciate the courtesy of the brilliant young Liberal leader, as he respected the firmness with which he stood upon his rights, and the tenacity with which he held to his programme. With Mr. Mills he had most cordial relations, and yet no man could more readily disturb his equanimity and touch his temper. Mr. Mills' courage, his pertinacity, his baffling questions, his calculated, persistent, roundabout methods of getting at the truth sometimes greatly aggravated the Conservative leader. He hated to be forced into

a corner. He hated to make any confession or to be driven from any position. Mr. Davies, too, when he came out from behind his desk and flung his keen and vigorous eloquence into the face of the First Minister, often stirred his anger and sometimes roused his resentment. Mr. Lister could likewise move him out of his usual smiling humour; and though Mr. Paterson did not often drive the old man to anger, he was one of the few Liberals who could reach his political conscience.

Sir John Macdonald was fond of applause. He delighted in a bit of flattery from an opponent. He knew, as few men have known, how to use the social influence to political advantage. The man who came to Parliament with unsettled opinions, who wanted social notice, who wanted something for his constituency, was likely soon to find himself at the wheels of the old man's chariot. The young member was always noticed. The waverer was strengthened, and the wounded were healed. His appeals to party loyalty were always effective. His followers never failed to laugh when he joked. They always cheered his appeals. They always warmed into enthusiasm when he pointed to his majority in the House and in the country, and to the record of his achievements. The Conservatives in Parliament and in the constituencies loved Sir John Macdonald, and few men who had ever followed him could withstand his personal appeal. He had won great victories for his party, he had

led them to triumph again and again, and they were grateful and loyal to the end, and mourned for him as for one taken out from their very households.[1] Many Liberals, too, while they quarreled with his methods and were uncompromisingly hostile to his whole system of government, rather liked his cheerful audacity, and were not quite without a feeling of admiration for his strong and

[1] "Sir John had a wonderful influence over many men. They would go through fire and water to serve him, did serve him, and got, some of them, little or no reward. But they served him because they loved him, and because with all his great powers they saw in him their own frailties. He abounded in the right kind of charity. And speaking of the love his friends and followers had for him, Mr. Pope dwells on the "old guard" and the old loyalty to the chief. So it was, but there were dark days also, when even those who afterwards enrolled themselves in the guard, passed by on the other side. If ever there was a man in low water, it was Sir John as I saw him one day in the winter of 1875, coming out of the House into the bitter air, dressed in an old Red River sash and coat, and the old historic mink-skin cap, tottering down the hill to the eastern gateway alone, others passing him with a wide sweep. The lesson of Sir John's life is that he pulled himself out of those days and trials into higher and more solid footing. But Sir John's real "old guard" were not the men who stood with him at Ottawa, but the greater old guard who stood and fought for him in every township, year after year, and to whom a call by name or a nod of the head was all the recompense they got and yet the recompense they most prized. Sir John has been praised for his statesmanship, and for this I, too, give him all praise. But his statesmanship was limited to two things: carrying on the Government when no one else could do it, and do it so well and so continuously, and forging the country together. He originated no great principle. He appropriated, however, freely from others when an opportunity offered, or when he thought another's idea would lead to or keep him in office."—Mr. W. F. Maclean, M.P., in a sketch of Sir John Macdonald entitled "The Canadian Themistocles," in the *Canadian Magazine*, January, 1895.

picturesque personality. He knew men to the core, and he could play upon their passions and prejudices as the master player upon the instrument that he loves. He was fertile in expedients, bold in the use of means, a master at the board by his very fondness for the great game he played. He was a favourite with journalists. He deemed no man beneath his notice. He never forgot that popularity was power. It may be that he was a supreme opportunist in face of forces which he could not control, or which he desired to control for his own political purposes. But in this sense Gladstone and Peel and even Cromwell were opportunists. It is only those whom Stevenson would call the "faithful failures" of politics that are willing to go down into history as the champions of lost causes, and to forego temporary advantage in hope of reaction or in expectation of the applause of posterity.

But Sir John Macdonald was more than an opportunist. He had clear and definite ideals. He could face a popular clamour with signal courage. He seldom forgot that in order to promote the true interests of the Confederation it was essential to maintain good relations between the two races which comprise the bulk of the Canadian population, to resist the destructive tendencies of racialism, to respect even the prejudices of minorities, and to maintain loyally the guarantees of the Constitution. It is true that he often profited

by racial and sectarian movements, but he was always their master, or at least seldom their servant, and in the end he moderated the temper, or baffled the purposes of the extremists. It was here that he did his best work, and his example of patient conciliation and resolute toleration was of inestimable value to the country in its formative period and must stand always as a beacon light to Canadian statesmen. He was jealous for the dignity of Parliament, for the integrity of the Bench, for the commercial credit of the country, for the legislative independence and self-governing rights of Canada. We have, in Mr. Pope's story of the negotiation of the treaty of Washington, striking evidence of his correct appreciation of the duty of a Canadian statesman under difficult circumstances. Devoted as he was to British connection, and zealous as he was to strengthen the bonds of affection which unite Canada to Great Britain, he did not forget that he was primarily and particularly the custodian of the rights of Canada, and no man could have done more to prevent sacrifice of Canadian interests by the British commissioners in order to conciliate American opinion. Perhaps there was after all a partial sacrifice of Canadian interests on that occasion, but we know now that Sir John Macdonald was not at fault, and in fact all his public life was marked by scrupulous concern for the rights of Canada in international negotiations, as well as for a sympathetic but

reasoned and practical conception of Canada's relations to the Empire.

He was very human, conscious of his faults, happy in his successes and achievements, and upon the whole, patient under attacks as savage and persistent as ever fell to the lot of any public man in Canada. These attacks were sometimes so violent and so bitter that they failed of their purpose, and possibly created a measure of sympathy for the Conservative leader. At any rate, in his later years he became very strongly entrenched in the hearts of his countrymen, and as the mists fall away, and partisan rage softens, and prejudices disappear, we shall perhaps forget that in the pursuit of power he was often unfair and sometimes even unscrupulous and desperate, and remember only that the completed work of the statesman becomes the common possession of the whole people. Sir John Macdonald must forever stand as one of the most consummate party leaders in British history, and one of the most picturesque and impressive figures among the statesmen of the Empire.

While Sir John Macdonald lay dead at Earnscliffe, and the country's grief was at its keenest, and all party differences were forgotten in the common sorrow, Mr. Laurier pronounced a remarkable eulogy upon his great rival. He said that in many respects Sir John Macdonald was Canada's greatest son, and in every sense Canada's foremost citizen and

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statesman. "I think it can be asserted that, for the supreme art of governing men, Sir John Macdonald was gifted as few men in any land or in any age were gifted—gifted with qualities which would have made him famous wherever exercised, and which would have shown all the more conspicuously the larger the theatre. The fact that he could congregate together elements the most heterogeneous and blend them into one compact party, and to the end of his life keep them steadily under his hand, is perhaps altogether unprecedented. The fact that during all those years he retained unimpaired, not only the confidence, but the devotion—the ardent devotion and affection of his party—is evidence that besides those higher qualities of statesmanship to which we were the daily witnesses, he was also endowed with those inner, subtle, undefinable graces of soul which win and keep the hearts of men. . . . He was fond of power and he never made any secret of it. Many times we have heard him avow it on the floor of this Parliament, and his ambition in this respect was gratified as perhaps no other man's ambition ever was. In my judgment even the career of William Pitt can hardly compare with that of Sir John Macdonald in this respect; for although William Pitt, moving in a higher sphere had to deal with problems greater than our problems, yet I doubt if in the intricate management of a party William Pitt had to contend with difficulties equal to those that

Sir John Macdonald had to contend with." His statesmanship, Mr. Laurier declared, was written in the history of Canada. "It may be said, without any exaggeration whatever, that the life of Sir John Macdonald from the date he entered Parliament is the history of Canada, for he was connected and associated with all the events, all the facts which brought Canada from the position it then occupied —the position of two small provinces, having nothing in common but their common allegiance, united by a bond of paper and united by nothing else—to the present state of development which Canada has reached. Although my political views compel me to say that, in my judgment, his actions were not always the best that could have been taken in the interest of Canada, although my conscience compels me to say that of late he has imputed to his opponents motives which I must say in my heart he has misconceived,[1] yet I am only too glad here to sink these differences and to remember only the great services he has performed for our country—to remember that his actions always displayed great originality of view, unbounded fertility of resource, a high level of intellectual conception, and above all a far-reaching vision beyond the event of the day, and still higher, permeating the whole, a broad patriotism,—a

[1] This is a reference to the charges of "veiled treason" and disloyalty to British connection made against the Liberal party during the electoral canvas of 1891.

devotion to Canada's welfare, Canada's advancement, and Canada's glory."[1] It will probably be found that this speech correctly indicates the final judgment of history upon the career and character of Sir John Macdonald. It was this man, thrice bedded in the affections of the people, still in physical vigour, and in plenitude of intellectual power, whom Mr. Laurier faced when he took his seat to the left of the Speaker as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.

[1] Hansard, June 8th, 1891.

CHAPTER XVIII

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

A FEW weeks after the general election which took place on February 22nd, 1887, Mr. Blake addressed a private letter to the Liberal members of the new Parliament in which he intimated that when the House met he would require to have the question of the leadership considered by a party caucus. The letter did not amount to a positive resignation of the office, but was so worded as to bear that interpretation, and was so interpreted by the Conservative journals. The communication, of course, was not intended for the public, but a copy fell into unfriendly hands, and its publication on the eve of the meeting of Parliament was a cause of confusion and damage to the Liberal party. Some at least of the Conservative "bolters" of Quebec—now safely seated for another Parliament, and very conscious of the fact that power and patronage still reposed in the hands of Sir John Macdonald, were eager to fall back on the commissariat, and the contemplated withdrawal of Mr. Blake from the Liberal leadership was just the excuse that was needed. It is likely that the Liberal party would have stood stronger in the earlier divisions of the

session, and that the alliances produced by Mr. Blake's North-West policy would have proved more enduring if it had not been so well understood that his resignation was impending, and so generally recognized that his successor, however popular and gifted, could not at once command all Mr. Blake's support in the House or in the country. Selection by a parliamentary caucus is but the first step in the making of a party leader. He has still to impress his personality upon the country and make his way into the heart and confidence of the people. This is the slow growth of years, even in the case of such men as Sir John Macdonald and Mr. Laurier, and there can never be certainty that even the finest parliamentary figure will become a successful popular leader. For sheer intellectual power, Mr. Blake and Sir John Thompson have had few peers in the Canadian Parliament. Neither had those rare gifts of popular leadership which belonged to Sir John Macdonald, and which are probably possessed in equal degree by Mr. Laurier. Hence, a change of political leaders is always an experiment, and no purely parliamentary reputation gives at once that authority which intercourse with the people and actual exercise of leadership finally confer.

It is easily understood, therefore, that the rumours of Mr. Blake's retirement had an ominous sound in the ears of Liberals, and greatly affected the spirit of the party in Parliament and in the

country. The House met in April, and at the first Liberal caucus of the session, Mr. Blake was formally re-elected as leader of the Opposition. It was announced that he had accepted, but closely as the secrets of caucus are guarded, it is now known that the report was not quite accurate. It is safe to say that he was subjected to tremendous pressure, and found it almost impossible to secure an immediate acceptance of his resignation. But he gave no pledge to continue, and from that moment it was well understood that before the close of the session his successor must be appointed. Mr. Blake's health was bad, he was worn down by insomnia, and quite unequal to the long night sittings of the Commons and the arduous labours of leadership. He was so constituted that so long as he held the leadership he could not shirk the onerous duties and responsibilities of the position, and naturally as the session proceeded his health grew worse and his determination to resign more fixed and irrevocable. Finally on June 2nd he met his party in caucus and definitely and absolutely resigned the leadership. What to do then was a serious problem for the Opposition. There was no common opinion as to who should succeed, and this, no doubt, because few had then thought that it was possible to put a French Canadian Catholic at the head of a political party in Canada. For the moment, caucus appointed a small advisory committee to

manage the affairs and direct the policy of the party. This committee comprised Sir Richard Cartwright and the Hon. David Mills for Ontario, Mr. Laurier and the Hon. François Langelier for Quebec, the Hon. Charles Weldon for New Brunswick, the Hon. A. G. Jones for Nova Scotia, the Hon. L. H. Davies for Prince Edward Island, and Mr. Robert Watson for Manitoba. This was, of course, a temporary expedient, ineffective for parliamentary purposes, and impossible during the recess. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle." It was necessary to agree upon a leader. At least three names were seriously canvassed for the appointment. These were Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. Laurier, and Mr. Mills. All three had great qualifications, and all three had warm supporters in the Liberal parliamentary party. Mr. Blake, who probably knew Mr. Laurier better than any other man in Parliament, thought the interests of the party would be best served by his appointment to the leadership. The knowledge of Mr. Blake's preference probably determined the action of the caucus which met on June 7th to choose his successor. Mr. Laurier's nomination was made by Sir Richard Cartwright and seconded by Mr. Mills and unanimously ratified.

It was represented in the press reports next morning that Mr. Laurier had received only a temporary appointment, and that, in fact, his tenure

of the leadership was conditional upon Mr. Blake's restoration to health and return to his place in Parliament. In its issue of June 8th, the Toronto *Globe* said: "Our advices at a late hour do not fully warrant the opinion that the matter has been finally settled. It would appear that Mr. Laurier has been made responsible for at least the temporary discharge of the duties of chief spokesman, but to leave the business in such shape will be a grave error. The Liberals must face the situation squarely, and recognize practically that it would be unfair to Mr. Laurier to place the heavy burden on his shoulders without reposing in him all the privileges, freedom, and authority of the lead. His appointment would be as judicious and generally acceptable as any, but it would be an error to place him or any other man in the false position that would ensue from a failure to recognize that Mr. Blake's return to the lead is absolutely not to be looked for. It would be no less unfair to Mr. Blake to allow an impression to prevail in the country that the stricken chief can be expected to reassume, at peril of a total break-down, any of the responsibilities which he has been compelled to abandon. His friends are naturally reluctant to give up hope of his speedy return, but they must do so, not less for his sake than for the interests of their Parliamentary organization."

This was a correct statement of Mr. Blake's position, but the writer had not penetrated the

secrets of caucus. Mr. Laurier was not asked to accept either a temporary or a conditional appointment. It was he that fought against the acceptance of the office, and despite the earnest persuasions and entreaties of his associates, would agree only to a temporary appointment and a partial acceptance of the authority and responsibility of leadership. He required that the advisory committee should continue, and insisted that he should not be put before the country as the leader of the party. He even pleaded that the action of caucus should be considered as strictly private, and that the fact of his nomination to the leadership should not be announced. It is no secret that he favoured the appointment of Sir Richard Cartwright, and could only regard the selection of himself for the office as a grave personal and political mistake. He pleaded and remonstrated with genuine emotion against the insistent determination of caucus to force his acceptance, and withheld his positive refusal only on condition that the final decision should be postponed until the close of the session, and that in the meantime he should serve only as the nominal parliamentary leader in Mr. Blake's absence.

In Mr. Laurier's judgment there were many powerful reasons why he should not accept the leadership of the Liberal party. He had never enjoyed robust health, his means were limited, and desire for the high place to which he was called had never entered within the scope of his

ambition. He had now the companionship of books, the leisure of the student, means, far short of affluence, but ample for his scale of living, a position in Parliament which gave him all the influence he sought and all the authority he coveted. His ideal of happiness was that of Edmond Schérer,—"to work, to content oneself with little, to lose without bitterness, to grow old without regret." He knew that the burden of leadership would tax his strength, exhaust his means, and consume his leisure, and upon all these grounds the decision of caucus was unwelcome. These, however, were personal considerations which could perhaps be set aside if it could be shown that his assumption of the direction and management of a national party was vital to the party's interests and the country's welfare. But he found it impossible to reach any such conclusion. He remembered that he was a Roman Catholic and a French Canadian, and he was profoundly convinced that his race and religion would be fatal barriers to the success of the Liberal party under his leadership. He remembered that he had antagonized powerful forces in his own province; and while he knew that the great mass of the people of the English communities could not be influenced by racial and sectarian considerations, he still feared that the proportion of the electorate subject to such appeals would always be strong enough to turn many constituencies against any political

party which might venture to put a French Catholic from Quebec at its head. He remembered that the Liberal party had always found its chief source of strength in Ontario, and deemed it wise, therefore, that the leader should be chosen from Ontario, and should profess the Protestant faith and speak the English tongue as his native language. He remembered the old quarrels over the representation in the Parliament of united Canada, and the spectre of French domination which loomed across so many pages of Canadian history. He knew that even then Quebec was under suspicion in Ontario, and that the time was unpropitious for the elevation of a Quebec Liberal, identified with Mr. Blake's policy, to the leadership of a national party. This view indeed found expression in some influential organs of public opinion.

In commenting upon the report that Mr. Laurier had been asked to serve as leader for the session, the Toronto *Mail* of June 9th, said: "Mr. Laurier is an eloquent man, of unblemished personal character, and of a wide knowledge of our political history. It is felt, however, that at a time like the present, when great events are in the air, Ontario should have the commanding voice on the Opposition as well as on the Government benches. We pay three-fifths of the taxation; ours is the only province not begging better terms; we have by far the largest stake in the present and future; upon our shoulders the support of the whole edifice

of Confederation is devolving more and more. There is another objection to Mr. Laurier. His abilities as a speaker in and out of Parliament, his kind and winning manner and his spotless reputation as an individual, are not, as has been said, in dispute. No one on the Opposition side, not even Mr. Blake, is much better equipped for the leadership as regards these valuable qualities. Unfortunately, he is identified in the public mind more than any other man with the Riel movement, which discredited the Opposition at the recent election." Notwithstanding all these unfavourable circumstances, Mr. Laurier so won upon the sympathy and confidence of his Liberal associates during the remaining weeks of the session, that he was at length forced to bow to the will of caucus and definitely accept the leadership. On the day of prorogation, June 23rd, 1887, he agreed that an announcement to this effect should be made, although he was still persuaded that the step was unwise, and gravely doubtful if the Liberals of the country would heartily accept the decision of the parliamentary party.[1]

[1] Mr. Laurier, notwithstanding his undoubtedly sincere protest, was elected to the leadership upon the motion of Sir Richard Cartwright, seconded by Mr. Mills, and with the unanimous approval of the parliamentary Opposition. His acceptance of the responsibility was generous and chivalric in a high degree, as all know who are acquainted with certain family business of the Opposition, which we do not intend to discuss at this time. It remains to be seen whether he possesses, in addition to parliamentary eloquence of the first order and a character entirely stainless, the skill, the firmness, the grasp of procedure,

It can hardly be wrong now to say that some of the Liberal members, while animated by feelings of the utmost good will to Mr. Laurier, doubted the success of the experiment, and shared his fears that a French Catholic could not successfully lead a political party in Canada. This apprehension extended to the country, and was strengthened by the events which surrounded and immediately succeeded his accession to the leadership. The fires of the Riel agitation were still smouldering when Mr. D'Alton McCarthy and his allies entered upon the campaign for the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act, and for the abolition of French as an official language in the North-West Territories. Mr. Mercier became Premier of Quebec in 1886, and in the legislative session of 1888, put through the Assembly an Act for the settlement of the Jesuit Estates. In consequence of the suppression by the Pope of the Jesuit order in 1773, these estates fell to the Crown and were applied to the promotion of public instruction in the Province of Quebec. By the Act of Confederation they became vested in the provincial Government and subject to the control of the Legislature. All down the years the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church had claimed to be the natural and rightful beneficiaries of these estates. They contended that by the laws of Quebec as they existed under the

the speedy decision, and the determination to lead, which are necessary to a leader.—Editorial in the Toronto *Globe*, February 22nd, 1888.

French régime, property of this nature would have reverted to the bishops as the ordinaries of the various dioceses in which the property was situated. When the Jesuits became incorporated in the province by Mr. Mercier's Act of 1887, they likewise made a claim to the estates. These persistent claims prejudiced the position of the property, and seriously reduced its value as a provincial asset. It yielded a revenue of only 2 per cent. upon a valuation of $1,200,000, and attempts at sale were rendered abortive by the intervention of the religious authorities.

On various occasions provincial Ministers had opened negotiations with the bishops, but until Mr. Mercier came into office no progress was made and the demands of the ecclesiastics remained unsatisfied. Mr. Mercier undertook to effect a settlement and there was something bold and thorough in the terms of his proposition. His Act authorized the payment of $400,000 as compensation to the Jesuits in lieu of the lands of which they were possessed prior to the conquest, and of which they were deprived by confiscation. It was expressly provided that the sum granted as compensation should stand as a special deposit until the Pope could ratify the settlement, and determine how the money should be distributed. Subsequently, His Holiness divided the amount among the Jesuits, the archbishops, and bishops of the province, and Laval University, while, in conse-

quence of the settlement, and in order to avoid injustice to the English population, the grant to Protestant schools in Quebec was increased by $60,000. There were twelve Protestants in the Legislature but only two of these took open exception to this remarkable measure. Indeed, Mr. Mercier was able to say: "I thank the Protestant members for the moderation with which they have discussed this question. It is a good omen. The unanimity which now prevails is a proof that the different races of which our population is composed have lived in peace and harmony, and approach the most delicate questions with that spirit of conciliation which accomplishes wonders when it is properly directed." But peace and harmony and the spirit of conciliation soon gave way before one of the most bitter and intemperate agitations which even this country has ever witnessed.

Some of the chief journals of Ontario denounced the measure with vigour and passion, a group of influential members of the Commons, both Conservative and Liberal, united to demand disallowance of the Act by the federal Government, and eminent Protestant clergymen and laymen organized to influence opinion in the country. The motion for disallowance, which was moved in the House of Commons by Col. William E. O'Brien, of Muskoka, in a speech of great force and eloquence, declared that the power of disallowance was a prerogative essential to the national existence

of the Dominion; that it should be fearlessly used for the protection of the rights of a minority, for the preservation of the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and for safe-guarding the general interests of the people; and that the passage of the Jesuit Estates Act was beyond the power of the Quebec Legislature, inasmuch as it endowed from public funds a religious organization, thereby violating the undoubted constitutional principle of the complete separation of Church and State and of the absolute equality of all denominations before the law, because it recognized the usurpation of a right by a foreign authority, His Holiness, the Pope of Rome, to claim that his consent was necessary to empower the provincial Legislature to dispose of the public domain, and because the endorsement of the Society of Jesus, an alien, secret, and politico-religious body, the expulsion of which from every Christian community wherein it has had a footing has been rendered necessary by its intolerant and mischievous intermeddling with the functions of civil government, is fraught with danger to the civil and religious liberties of the people of Canada.[1]

The advocates of disallowance sought to prove the various propositions embodied in the resolution, and it thus became necessary to trace far back along the years the history of the Jesuit order, to revive memories of dark and sinister events, and

[1] Hansard, March 26th, 1889.

fight over again the ruthless theological quarrels which had cursed mankind in other generations. "God gave the gospel," said Froude; "the father of lies invented theology." In Ontario the scope of the agitation was widened and made to touch some of the burning issues of provincial politics. At a convention held in Toronto in June, attended by 700 delegates, not only did the resolutions adopted denounce the Jesuits as "an alien association, hostile to free institutions;" characterize the Jesuits Estates Act as "a violation of the trust under which the said estates were transferred by the Crown to the provincial authorities for the purposes of education exclusively;" and call for united and persistent action to "guard against the political encroachments of ultramontanism;" but it was also demanded that every citizen of Ontario should be entered on the assessment roll as *prima facie* a supporter of the public school system, and that English should be the language of instruction in all public schools in the province.

Still, the main object of the agitation was to secure the disallowance of Mr. Mercier's Act, and it was with that question that the federal Ministers, and Mr. Laurier as leader of the Liberal party were concerned. No one among the political leaders of the country stood out against the agitation more firmly and inflexibly than Mr. Laurier. As a federalist he could take no other position. The ostentatious recognition of the Pope in Mr. Mercier's

Act was, perhaps, unwise and unnecessary, but the estates belonged to the province, and the Act of Settlement was within the competence of the Legislature. It was no small satisfaction to Mr. Laurier and the Liberal party that the Government was forced to abandon the policy of the federal veto and meet the advocates of disallowance with the arguments Liberals had always employed in resisting the attempts of the federal authority to override provincial legislation. The position of the Government was stated by Sir John Thompson, Minister of Justice, in answer to petitions asking for the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act, in these words: "The subject matter of the Act is one of provincial concern only, having relation to a fiscal matter entirely within the control of the Legislature of Quebec."[1] This throughout the debate was the position of the Government, and practically the position of Parliament, for only thirteen votes were recorded in favour of Col. O'Brien's motion.[2] The soundness of the position is

[1] It is reported from Ottawa that an effort is being made to secure the disallowance of the Compensation Bill, which has just passed its third reading. Beyond question, however, the Quebec Legislature is well within its rights in passing that measure, as well as in passing the Jesuit Incorporation Act of last year.—Toronto *Mail*, July 5th, 1888.

[2] The thirteen members of the House who voted for the disallowance motion were: Barron of North Victoria, Bell of Addington, Charlton of North Norfolk, Cockburn of Centre Toronto, Denison of West Toronto, Macdonald of East Huron, McCarthy of North Simcoe, McNeill of North Bruce, O'Brien of Muskoka, Scriver of Huntingdon, Sutherland of North Oxford, Tyrwhitt of South Simcoe, and Wallace of West York.

now generally recognized, and from this time dates also the disuse of the federal veto as a feature of Conservative policy.

Before Sir John Thompson entered Parliament, Mr. McCarthy was the chief constitutional adviser of Sir John Macdonald. He leaned like his chief to the aggrandizement of the federal authority. Sir John Thompson was a greater lawyer than either, perhaps as great a lawyer as ever sat in the House of Commons, and under his authority the Conservative party was led gradually but surely towards the adoption of sounder constitutional principles.

In the course of his speech in the House on Col. O'Brien's motion, Mr. Laurier said: "Ever since the year 1854 I charge against the Government and against the Conservative party that they have been able to retain power, almost without interruption, largely by pandering to the prejudices of the one province and the prejudices of the other province. In the good Catholic Province of Quebec, to which I belong, the party supporting the Administration have always represented themselves as the champions of the Roman Catholic cause. They have always denounced their opponents, the Liberals of French origin like myself, as men of dangerous doctrines and tendencies. They have always represented the Liberals of Ontario as men actuated in all their actions and inspirations by a hatred of everything French and Catholic. At the same time, in the good Protestant

Province of Ontario the same party has always been held up to the front as the party of unbending and uncompromising Protestantism; and the Conservative press to-day represent honourable gentlemen on this side as basely pandering to the influence of the French people and of the Catholic persuasion."[1] It was natural under the circumstances, and in view of the continuous struggle of Quebec Liberals against clerical intimidation and coercion, that Mr. Laurier should make these observations, and natural that he should resent the attempt to put him before the country as an agent of the Jesuits for no other offence than faithful adherence to a traditional Liberal doctrine. For the time, however, his hold upon the Liberals of Ontario was lessened by this agitation, and he was conscious of the weakness of a Catholic leadership under such trying conditions. Besides, his record in Quebec was but imperfectly understood in Ontario, and his fitness for the Liberal leadership was not yet fully demonstrated. In the previous summer he had made a tour of the Muskoka Lakes, and had spoken at Oakville, Beaverton, Guelph, Mount Forest, and St. Thomas, and was received everywhere with cordial good will. But he was still a comparative stranger in the province, and had no personal hold upon the masses of the Liberal party. Hence, when it was proposed that he should come up to Toronto and defend his course on the Jesuit Es-

[1] Hansard, March 28th, 1889.

tates Act, there was grave misgiving among many Liberals, and a general fear that only harm to the leader and to the party would result. He was strongly and generally advised not to make the experiment. It was represented that he should leave the business of defence to the Conservative Ministers, and not further involve the Liberal party in these mischievous and dangerous controversies. For a time he yielded to these representations. But he grew more and more restless, and more and more determined upon an appeal to the Protestant population of Ontario; and at length with the co-operation of a small group of Liberals in Toronto a date was fixed and a meeting announced. On September 30th, 1889, therefore, he spoke to a great meeting at the Horticultural Pavilion with that candour and eloquence which mark all his important deliverances, and it is seldom indeed that one speech has more profoundly influenced public opinion. The temper of the meeting was critical, if not positively hostile. The mention of the name of Mr. D'Alton McCarthy evoked a tempest of cheering. More than once the audience threatened to get out of hand. But the orator held on his way, tactfully, warily and resolutely, until all scoffing was silenced, all hostile feeling overcome, and the meeting keyed to genuine respect for the man, if not quite won to general acceptance of his arguments.

The speech was a clear enunciation of the princi-

ple of federalism; a vigorous repudiation of the charge that the Liberal party had sacrificed its principles and dishonoured its traditions for the support of a dominant Church; a spirited review of the long struggle of the Liberals of Quebec for civil and religious freedom, and an eloquent assertion of the right of the French people to use their native tongue. He knew, he said, that it was a great disadvantage for a French Canadian not to speak English, but it was not intended that Confederation should be based upon the humiliation of any one race. "It was not intended that any should give up its characteristic, but it was expected that though every nationality might retain its individuality, yet that all would be actuated by one aspiration and would endeavour to form one nation." He said: "If any there are amongst my fellow-countrymen of French origin who have ever dreamed of forming themselves into a small community of Frenchmen on the banks of the St. Lawrence, I am not one of them." They had a long struggle to secure the privileges of British subjects, but though rights were long withheld, at last the concession was made without any reservation and in the most ample manner. "It would be the blackest ingratitude if, after we had sought from England the privileges and rights of British subjects, we were now to reject the responsibilities of British subjects. I say that it would be the blackest ingratitude if, having sought the protection to grow strong, we

were, when strong enough, to attempt to stab the friendly hand and to refuse to cast in our lot with those who are fellow-countrymen of ours, whose fellow-countrymen we are in deed, and whose birthright we claim as our own inheritance since we became subjects of England."

He denied that it was ever the intention of any Roman Catholic in Lower Canada to put the supremacy of the Pope over the supremacy of the Queen. "If," he said, "the Legislature of Quebec, or any other Legislature were ever to attempt to substitute the authority of the Pope for the authority of the Queen, that Legislature by that very fact would place itself beyond the pale of the Canadian Confederation, would place itself beyond the pale of British citizenship, and that act would be simply treason and would have to be dealt with as treason." He reminded his audience that he was a French Canadian Liberal, and belonged to a party that for thirty years had fought the Ultramontanes in the Province of Quebec. But in the demand for the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act it was a constitutional point that was at issue, and attacks upon the character and teachings of Jesuits and Ultramontanes, could not justify a federal invasion of the legislative domain of the provinces. "This," he said, "is not the place to attack Ultramontanes. The proper ground of attack and defence on this subject is on the soil of the Province of Quebec. I will only say here that the

Ultramontanes, like all French Canadian Conservatives, have borrowed their political views, not from the British, but from the French school of politics." The power of disallowance, he argued, was the greatest danger to Confederation, and was antagonistic to the federal principle. All our history had shown that when that power was vested in the central Government, principle was sacrificed to expediency.

He dealt also with general political subjects, and particularly with the question of reciprocal trade with the United States, which was fast becoming the chief issue before the country. But, in the main, the address was a hand to hand encounter with the spokesmen of the Equal Rights movement, and the effect upon the country was marked and enduring. It was of this speech that a British journal said: "Mr. Laurier's Toronto speech places him at one bound in the front rank of British statesmen. To the eloquence native to the French Canadian, Mr. Laurier adds honesty, directness of purpose, and pure-minded patriotism, which mark him out as a leader. Men of such high mental and moral power were never more needed in the forefront of affairs in Canada than now."[1] Liberals who feared that no good could come out of Mr. Laurier's appearance in Ontario to resist the demand for disallowance and to justify the position of the Liberal party on the questions raised by the leaders

[1] From the *Canadian Gazette.*

of the Equal Rights movement, soon perceived their error, and throughout the country it was widely recognized that he had performed a great national service in the spirit of a patriot, and with the courage, discretion, and moderation of a statesman. Henceforth his authority over the Liberal party was undisputed, and the notion assiduously propagated by his political opponents in the English provinces that he was nothing more than an amiable figurehead, became thereafter only the last refuge of incorrigible partisans.

The movement for the abolition of the official use of French in the North-West Territories was an outgrowth of the Equal Rights agitation. The proposition was not unreasonable in itself. There was but a small French population in the Western Territories. It required no seer to foretell that the Western provinces would be English. It was important, if not essential, that these new communities should determine the character of their own local institutions. But the motion which Mr. McCarthy introduced in Parliament took a wide sweep, and threatened the French language in Quebec as well as in the far western country. The preamble to his resolution declared that: "It is expedient in the interest of the national unity of the Dominion that there should be community of language among the people of Canada, and that the enactment in the North-West Territories Act allowing the use of the French language should be expunged there-

from."[1] The motion was the more objectionable when the character of some of the speeches Mr. McCarthy had made outside Parliament was considered. "We must buckle on our armour," he told the people of Ontario. "This is a British country, and the sooner we take in hand our French Canadian fellow subjects and make them British in sentiment and teach them the English language, the less trouble we shall have to prevent. Sooner or later it must be settled." He added: "Now is the time when the ballot box will decide this great question before the people; and if that does not supply the remedy in this generation, bayonets will supply it in the next.[2]

[1] Hansard, January 22nd, 1890.

[2] From a speech delivered by Mr. McCarthy, at Stayner, July 12th, 1889.

It is interesting to contrast with this speech by Mr. McCarthy a speech made by Mr. Mercier, leader of the nationalist movement in Quebec, at the dedication of a monument to Jacques Cartier, one of the early discoverers, and to Brébeuf, one of the first missionaries to Canada, at Quebec, on June 24th, 1889. Mr. Mercier said: "The Government of which he was the head was ready to disappear if that would be the means of uniting the French Canadian people for the triumph of their sacred cause. For the sake of their nationality, for the sake of their religion they must be united. Religion and nationality formed a harmonious union in their midst. The strength of the French Canadian people lay in the union of the people with the clergy. . . . By coupling the name of the Jesuit hero, Brébeuf, with the immortal Jacques Cartier, they said to their insulters: 'It is useless to imagine that we will ever cease to be French and Catholic. This monument declares that after a century of separation from our ancient mother we are still French. More than that, we will remain French and Catholic.' He said this not as a provocation but as a reply. But once more he would say that to render this reply effective they must cease their

Mr. Laurier read his motion in the light of his speeches, and directly challenged the justice of his position and the propriety of his utterances. The Liberal leader said:

"The French Canadians are to be deprived of

fratricidal strife and be united. That was his word of advice to them on this great occasion. Let them cherish it and act accordingly, and all the actions of the fanatics of Ontario would come to naught.

Mr. Laurier spoke on the same occasion, and said: "We are French Canadians, but our country is not confined to the territory overshadowed by the citadel of Quebec; our country is Canada, it is the whole of what is covered by the British flag on the American continent. . . Our fellow-countrymen are not only those in whose veins runs the blood of France. They are all those, whatever their race or whatever their language, whom the fortune of war, the chances of fate, or their own choice have brought among us, and who acknowledge the sovereignty of the British Crown. As far as I am concerned, loudly do I proclaim it, those are my fellow-countrymen. I am a Canadian. But I have told it elsewhere, and with greater pleasure I repeat it here this evening, among all my fellow-countrymen, the first place in my heart is for those in whose veins runs the blood of my own veins. Yet I do not hesitate to say that the rights of my fellow-countrymen of different origin are as dear to me, as sacred to me as the rights of my own race, and if it unfortunately happened that they ever were attacked, I would defend them with just as much energy and vigour as the rights of my own race. . . What I claim for us is an equal share of sun, of justice, of liberty; that share we have, we have it in ample measure, and what we claim for ourselves we are anxious to grant to others. I do not want French Canadians to domineer over any one, nor any one to domineer over them. Equal justice, equal rights. It is written that the sands of the seas are numbered. It is written that not a hair falls from one's head without the permission of an Eternal Providence, eternally wise. Can we not believe that in that supreme battle here, on the Plains of Abraham, when the fate of arms turned against us, can we not believe that it entered into the decrees of Providence that the two races, up to that time enemies, should henceforth live in peace and harmony, and henceforth form one nation? Such was the inspiring cause of Confederation."

their language, not only in the North-West Territories, but wherever their language exists. They must be deprived of everything which constitutes their distinct individuality in this Dominion, and this must be done by legislation now; but if not done now by legislation, in future it will be done by force and violence—by bullets and bayonets. The expression is not mine, but that of the honourable gentleman himself. It has been repeated, not once or twice, but several times in different parts of the Dominion. So this is the policy upon which the honourable gentleman is endeavouring to form a new party, or to reorganize an old party. This is the policy the honourable gentleman offers to his fellow-countrymen of English origin. I denounce this policy as anti-Canadian; I denounce it as anti-British; I denounce it as being at variance with all the traditions of British Government in this country; I denounce it as fatal to the hope we at one time entertained, and which I, for one, am not disposed to give up, of forming a nation on this continent. I denounce it as a crime, the consequences of which are simply shocking to contemplate. The honourable gentleman may mean nothing more than a mere party device, but he is opening the flood-gates to passions which, once aroused, perhaps no human power may be able to restrain. He is appealing to national and religious passions, the most inflexible of all passions; and, whatever may be his motive, whatever his end, whatever his purpose, his

movement cannot be characterized by any other language than that of a national crime."[1]

This was strong language, but if Mr. McCarthy could have succeeded in his object, the results would have been hardly less serious than Mr. Laurier predicted. There are in Quebec more than a million of French-speaking people. They learn French at the mother's knee. They are cradled in French traditions. They look to the British flag as the symbol of the covenant which secures them in the possession and enjoyment of their language, their religion, and their local institutions. To put this population under attack and threaten it with loss of privileges and violation of constitutional guarantees is surely repugnant to rational patriotism and responsible statesmanship, and wholly foreign to the spirit of British institutions. In many respects Mr. McCarthy was an admirable figure in Canadian politics. He was singularly courageous and incorruptible. But in his attitude towards Quebec and in his handling of questions which touched the passions and prejudices of the French and Catholic people, he was often rash, impolitic, and unjust to the last degree. In so far as the motion affected the North-West only, Mr. Laurier was not disposed to offer serious objection. He said: "If the bill were a measure for the proscription of the French language in the North-West Territories alone, where the French population is small, I would be inclined to

[1] Hansard, February 17th, 1890.

say, let the motion pass, and let us get back to those measures of practical usefulness which demand our attention." Nor was he satisfied with an amendment declaring that the then state of things in the North-West should be permanent. He said: "It is impossible to admit that the institutions of the North-West are permanent. On the contrary they are exceptionally temporary; they deal with a state of things which is exceptional in itself; they were devised at a time when there was no population, and they must be modified from time to time as the necessities of the case require." He found his refuge again in the principle of federalism, and foresaw and conceded that the same measure of control over local affairs, and the same right to determine the character of their local institutions, must be granted to the western provinces of the future as were possessed by Quebec and Ontario and the Maritime communities. This was enough for the moment, and thus far on the questions raised by the Equal Rights Association it will hardly be disputed that Mr. Laurier was patient, prudent, and far-seeing, and that his attitude and utterances made for the unity and stability of the Confederation.[1] It was under such circumstances

[1] In 1891 the Parliament of Canada enacted that either the English or French language might be used in the Legislative Assembly of the Territories and in the Courts of Justice, and that the records and journals of the Assembly and all ordinances should be printed in both languages. The law is virtually a dead letter. French is used neither in the Courts nor in the Assembly, and all the official papers are printed

and in the throes of such issues that Mr. Laurier served his apprenticeship as leader of the Liberal party of Canada. When we review the events of that heated and tempestuous period, we can understand why he strove to induce Mr. Blake to reassume the leadership, and held so tenaciously to the opinion that his race, his religion, and his province were formidable hindrances to the success of the Liberal party in the constituencies.

in English only. The departments sometimes receive letters in French, but not more often than in German or Russian. The school ordinances of the Territories provide for the teaching of a primary course in French. Provision is also made for Catholic representation in the Educational Council for the Territories. Either Protestants or Catholics being in a minority in any school district may insist on the establishment of a Separate School. The majority of the Public Schools are Protestant. Where the Catholics are in the majority, their school is called the Public School and the Protestant the Separate School; but the Protestant Separate Schools are not denominational and are subject to exactly the same regulations as the Public Schools. The system is said to work smoothly.

CHAPTER XIX

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

COMMERCIAL and political conditions in Canada were seriously affected by the adoption of free trade in Great Britain. The new policy involved the repeal of the Navigation Laws and the abolition of the preferences in favour of colonial products. In 1840 there were more than eighty differential duties in favour of the Colonies. During the next ten or twelve years, all of these, except the preferences on timber, food, wine and spirits, were abolished. In 1821 the duty on colonial timber was ten shillings a load, while a tax of fifty-five shillings was imposed on foreign timber. In 1842 and again in 1843, the duties were reduced, and in 1846 legislation was adopted which by 1848 cut down the preference to fifteen shillings on foreign, and one shilling on colonial timber. In 1851 the preference was again reduced by half, and finally in 1860 the duties were equalized at one shilling on foreign and colonial timber alike. So it was with sugar. Down from 1844 the preference was steadily reduced, and in 1854 was finally abolished. Canada was hit hard by the equalization of the timber duties, and it is doubtful if the West Indies have ever recovered from the great blow dealt to their staple industry

by the abolition of the preference on colonial sugar. The repeal of the Navigation Laws was contemporaneous with the disappearance of the system of preferential treatment of colonial products. These laws, which according to Adam Smith were founded in national animosity, restricted the coasting trade to British vessels, and required that the owners, masters, and three-fourths of the crews of such vessels should be British subjects. It was impossible that such regulations could survive the teaching of Adam Smith and the ascendancy of the free traders; and in 1849 British trade was thrown open to the ships of the world, subject only to the provision that in order to secure reciprocal treatment from other nations, prohibitions or restrictions may by Order-in-Council be imposed upon the ships of any country in which British ships are liable to similar prohibitions or restrictions.

Down to the repeal of the Navigation Laws, the commercial fleets of Halifax, St. John, Quebec, and Montreal had a practical monopoly of the trade of the West Indies, while the differential duties in favour of colonial products gave the grain and timber of the North American colonies a substantial advantage in British markets. It is not strange, therefore, that these revolutionary changes in the historic policy of the Mother Country spread dismay throughout the colonies. All the material advantages of the connection with the Empire were swept away. The chief industries of the Canadas

and of the Maritime Provinces, in which great sums were invested, and upon which the labour and commerce of the country mainly depended, had to be adjusted to the changed circumstances. The process of adjustment necessarily involved loss and hardship. For a time the business energy of the country was paralyzed. The most adventurous spirits hesitated to embark in new enterprises. The output of old industries was restricted and wages and profits reduced.

These are the inevitable consequences of the removal of tariff discriminations, except by slow degrees and with infinite discretion. If by Acts of Parliament we establish particular industries and direct trade into particular channels, we turn the industrial energies of the people from other pursuits; and in the event of a reversal of the legislative policy, jeopardize capital and imperil the interests created by discriminatory tariffs. In the establishment of the free trade system the Home Government proceeded by gradual and calculated stages; but the colonists could not keep step with the new commercial policy, and as their fiscal advantages in Britain fell away, and new competitors met them in ports long closed to foreign vessels, colonial resentment deepened, and the tone of colonial remonstrances grew more angry and vehement. Treason, economic heresy, and revolutionary propaganda are the natural brood of commercial depression. The annexation manifesto of 1849 was not due altogether

to the intense gust of popular passion evoked by the appropriation of £100,000 of public money as compensation for rebellion losses in Quebec. That measure exasperated Conservatives who had stood as the champions of order and authority against the forces of Papineau, Nelson, and Mackenzie, but no mere domestic incident could have driven such men as the Redpaths, the Molsons, the Torrances, the Workmans, Francis Johnson, John Rose, A. T. Galt, David L. Macpherson, L. H. Holton, Edward Goff Penny, James Ferrier, and J. J. C. Abbott, genuinely attached as they were to British institutions, to declare for separation from the Empire. Loss of trade was at the basis of the manifesto, and commercial rather than political considerations inspired the movement for political union with the United States.[1]

One memorable paragraph of the address, signed by more than three hundred of the representative

[1] "The immediate effects were, of course, in the highest degree discouraging, and a moody feeling of discontent pervaded the mercantile community of Canada. Shackled by such restrictions as those under which they laboured, they could not hope to compete with the capital and enterprise of the United States in prosecuting the carrying trade. A large majority of the persons most seriously affected had always been zealous loyalists. They now considered that their loyalty had been ill requited by the Mother Country, and the conviction was forced upon them that their position would be improved by annexation. . . . . Three-fourths of the merchants were bankrupt, and real estate was practically unmarketable. As usual in such cases, most of the evils under which the colony groaned were charged by the sufferers upon the Mother Country."—Dent's "Canada Since the Union," Vol. II, pages 128-129.

merchants and traders of the country, tells how dark was the situation and how gloomy the outlook. "The reversal," said the manifesto, "of the ancient policy of Great Britain, whereby she withdrew from her colonies their wonted protection in her markets, has produced the most disastrous effects upon Canada. In surveying the actual condition of the country, what but ruin or rapid decay meets the eye? Our provincial Government and civic corporations embarrassed; our banking and other securities greatly depreciated; our mercantile and agricultural interests alike unprosperous; real estate scarcely saleable upon any terms; our unrivalled rivers, lakes, and canals almost unused; whilst commerce abandons our shores, and the circulating capital amassed under a more favourable system is dissipated, with none from any quarter to replace it. Thus, without available capital, unable to effect a loan with foreign States, or with the Mother Country—although offering security greatly superior to that which readily obtains money, both from the United States and Great Britain, when other than colonists are the applicants—crippled, therefore, and checked in the full career of private and public enterprise, this possession of the British Crown—our country—stands before the world in humiliating contrast with its immediate neighbours, exhibiting every symptom of a nation fast sinking to decay."

It was argued that the proposed union would

render Canada a field for American capital; equalize the value of real estate on both sides of the boundary; give stability to our institutions; raise our public, corporate, and private credit; increase our commerce both with the United States and foreign countries, without necessarily diminishing to any great extent our intercourse with Great Britain; render our rivers and canals the highway for the immigration to and exports from the West; introduce manufactures, particularly into Lower Canada, where water privileges and labour were abundant and cheap, and thus give remunerative employment to a non-producing population; secure forthwith the construction of railways with American capital, as feeders for all the great lines then approaching the Canadian frontiers; raise the value of agricultural produce at once to a par with that of the United States; greatly cheapen agricultural implements and many of the necessaries of life; enhance the value of timber; give to our shipbuilders at Quebec and on the Great Lakes an unlimited market in all parts of the American continent; while in the place of war and the alarms of war with a neighbour, there would be peace and amity between this country and the States, and in disagreements between the Republic and her chief, if not only rival among nations, the soil of Canada would not become the sanguinary arena for their settlement.[1]

[1] Lord George Bentinck, then leader of the English Tory party, writing to Disraeli on April 16th, 1846, said: "I hope we shall have an

In Toronto a weekly journal called *The Independent* was established to carry on the agitation, and its chief arguments centred in the withdrawal of the colonial preferences and the necessity thereby created for free access to the markets of the United States. The movement, however, made slight headway in Upper Canada, and was actively resisted by the British American League formed at Kingston, of which John A. Macdonald was one of the chief spirits, and which declared for the maintenance of connection with the Mother Country, for a confederation of all the provinces, and for a protectionist policy.[1] At a joint meeting of the British American League and the Colonial Association of New Brunswick, it was resolved: "That these colonies cannot remain in their present position without the prospect of immediate ruin, and that it is the duty of the Imperial Government either, first, to restore to the colonies a preference in the British markets over foreign goods; or, second, to have opened to them the markets of foreign countries,

important deputation over from Canada, representing that the inevitable results of these free trade measures in corn and timber will be to alienate the feelings of our Canadian colonists, and to induce them to follow their sordid interests, which will now undoubtedly be best consulted and most promoted by annexation to the United States."—From "Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography," by Benjamin Disraeli, 5th edition, London, 1852, page 180.

[1] See Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. 1, pages 71-72; J. C. Dent's "Canada Since the Union of 1841," Vol. II, pages 172, 173; and Lt.-Col. J. P. Macpherson's "Life of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. I, pages 187-196.

and more especially the United States, upon terms of reciprocity." The Parliament of Canada, in 1846, passed an address in which it was declared that the abandonment of the protection principle, the very basis of the colonial commercial system, was calculated materially to retard the agricultural improvement of the country, and check its hitherto rising prosperity. Situated as Canada was, with a climate so severe as to leave barely one-half of the year open for intercourse by the St. Lawrence with the Mother Country, the cost of transporting her products to market was much greater than was paid by the inhabitants of the United States, and without a measure of protection or some equivalent advantage, Canada could not compete successfully with that country. The improvement of water communications in Canada had been undertaken on the strength of the advantage it would give to the export trade to England. Should free trade be adopted the Canadian exports would fall off, there would be a diminution in the revenues from canal tolls, and consequently in the power of Canada to pay the debt guaranteed by England. The shipping interests in Montreal would be injured, and the consumption of British manufactures in Canada would be lessened. "It is much to be feared that should the inhabitants of Canada, from the withdrawal of all protection to their staple products, find that they cannot successfully compete with their neighbours of the United States in the only

market open to them, they will naturally and of necessity begin to doubt whether remaining a portion of the British Empire will be of that paramount advantage which they have hitherto found it to be."[1]

In the reply of the Imperial authorities to this remonstrance there is a touch of satire which must have been irritating and unwelcome at the moment. Mr. Gladstone, who had succeeded Lord Stanley as Colonial Secretary, stated that Her Majesty did not recognize any distinction in her affection for her subjects in England and those

[1] "Scarcely had the impulse been felt, when English policy, impelled by free trade principles, well nigh swept away every hope that had been inspired by glimpses of a dawning prosperity. The withdrawal of that artificial protection which had been accorded by the Imperial Parliament to the colonial trade forced these provinces into the family of nations. Canada felt the shock the most, but, imbued with a spirit of self-reliance, at once looked about for means whereby she might strengthen her crippled commerce. England had discriminated in favour of colonial breadstuffs and lumber, and the provinces had imposed differential duties in the interest of the Mother Country. The commercial policy of both had thus been in harmony. The repeal of the Corn Laws threw open to the United States a market in which the colonies had been hitherto favoured, and left the Canadians to struggle with a rival abroad which at home used every means to prevent their trade getting any headway. Canada possessed canals, but the commerce which they had been built to facilitate died on its hands, and the Navigation Laws then prevented foreign vessels from using them. The subsequent repeal of the Navigation Laws gave another advantage to the States which they have never reciprocated. The United States shipowners were admitted to share the coasting trade of the Empire, and the provinces saw, not without chagrin, American vessels both on the sea-coast and on their lakes, enjoying benefits for which nothing was granted to British subjects in return."—W. A. Foster in *The Westminster Review* for October, 1866.

beyond the seas. The Parliament of England was showing its equal regard for all the subjects of the Queen by enacting measures especially intended to ameliorate the conditions of the poorest and most numerous class of the people. It would be a source of the greatest pain to Her Majesty's Government if they could share in the impression that the connection between that country and Canada derived its force from the exchange of commercial preferences only. That might be a relation consisting in the exchange not of benefits but of burdens. Her Majesty's Government hoped that the connection rested upon a firmer basis, upon resemblance in origin, laws and manners, in what inwardly binds men and communities of men together, as well as in the close association of material interests, which interests, however, they felt would be advanced by commercial freedom. The people of Canada could not desire that the market for their farm products should be maintained by means of a perpetual tax upon the people of England. The Gladstone Government's acknowledgment of the Home Rule resolutions of the Canadian Parliament more than a third of a century later was hardly more frigid or more incisive.

In dealing with this correspondence and the adoption of free trade by Great Britain, the Toronto *Globe* said it was amusing to watch the effects of the new British policy upon the Tory press of the province. The comments of these papers

afforded an admirable illustration of the selfishness of Toryism. Give them everything they could desire and they were brimful of loyalty. They would chant pæans till they were sick, and drink goblets till they were blind, in praise of "wise and benevolent governors" who gave them all the offices and all the emoluments. But let their interest, real or imaginary, be affected, and how soon did their loyalty evaporate. Now there was talk of separation from the Mother Country unless the mother would continue to feed them in the method prescribed by the child. Tory loyalty was estimated in pounds, shillings and pence. When these were withdrawn it sustained a complete collapse. It was a strange thing, the Tory's loyalty. You might trample on every privilege, you might oppose the passage of every good law, you might enact class legislation by which the interests of the many were entirely sacrificed for the few, and you would not disturb the Tory's loyalty. He seemed to be the better pleased to show his loyalty for the preservation of things as they were. But the moment the Government ventured legislation on a broad, just, and comprehensive scale, the Tory's loyalty vanished. *The Globe* pointed out that Canada's exports of wheat had never equalled 200,000 quarters, and therefore her loss by the abolition of the preference would not exceed £40,000, while the British people, largely of the poorer classes, would gain £8,000,000 in the remission of taxation. Canada had a higher

destiny before her than to be merely the annual exporter of a few hundred thousand bushels of flour to Great Britain. From this *The Globe* went on to advocate the establishment of manufactures in Canada, which would afford a home market for the products of her farms, and overcome the loss sustained by the abolition of the British preferences in favour of colonial products.[1]

It was, of course, out of the question to hope that the petitions and remonstrances of the colonies could effect a reversal of the free trade policy of England in the very hour of its inception, and particularly in view of the teaching of the Manchester school, which set trade above colonies and extension of commerce above extension of empire. The idea, in fact, was then growing in the minds of many British statesmen that colonial possessions were a danger and a disadvantage, and a few years later there was the open advocacy of dismemberment, which an American has described as "the ass-born policy of the British Government."[2] Still, British

[1] See "Commercial Federation and Colonial Trade Policy," by Prof. John Davidson, of the University of New Brunswick, for a careful and comprehensive account of the events of this period.

[2] "Imperialism," by C. De Thierry, page 19.

In a contribution to the *Atlantic Monthly*, for March, 1902, on "England and the War of Secession," Mr. Goldwin Smith said: "Gladstone wished that the North should let the South go, and be indemnified in course of time by the voluntary accession of Canada. He said this in a letter to a friend, who, fearing that the letter might be embarrassing to the writer thereafter, thought it better to keep it to himself."

Ministers loyally and energetically seconded the efforts of Canada to effect a reciprocity arrangement with the United States, and finally in 1854, mainly through the patient, judicious, and skilful diplomacy of Lord Elgin, a treaty was successfully negotiated. This convention gave to the fishermen of the United States, in common with British subjects, the right to take fish of every kind, except shell-fish, on the sea-coasts and shores, and in the bays, harbours, and creeks of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, and the adjacent islands, with permission to land upon the coasts and shores of such colonies and islands for the purpose of drying their nets and curing their fish; and admitted into the United States from the British provinces free of duty:—grain, flour, animals, meats, cotton, wool, seeds, vegetables, fruits, fish, poultry, eggs, hides, furs, skins, stone, marble, slate, butter, cheese, tallow, lard, horns, manures, ores of metals, coal, pitch, tar, turpentine, ashes, timber, lumber, firewood, plants, shrubs, trees, fish-oil, rice, broom-corn, bark, gypsum, burr or grindstones, dye-stuffs, flax, hemp, tow, rags, and tobacco unmanufactured. The free navigation of the St. Lawrence and of the canals in Canada was conceded to the citizens of the United States, and the navigation of Lake Michigan secured to British subjects. It was also provided "that no export or other duty shall be levied on lumber or timber of any kind cut on that portion

of the American territory in the State of Maine watered by the River St. John and its tributaries, and floated down that river to the sea, when the same is shipped to the United States from the Province of New Brunswick."

Under this liberal and comprehensive convention the trade of Canada had a remarkable and splendid expansion, and very close and intimate business relationships were established between the American states and the British provinces. Possibly we over-estimate the advantages which Canada derived from the arrangement. In any event we should have measurably recovered from the disappearance of the British preferences and the repeal of the Navigation Laws, and possibly have discovered, as we did discover so many years later, that a free British market has a voracious maw for Canadian products, and that an abiding trade depression in a country with Canada's wealth of resources and thrifty and energetic population need never be apprehended. Still the Treaty of 1854 was of timely and of signal benefit to Canada, and also of substantial advantage to the United States. The value of fish taken by the fishing vessels of Maine and Massachusetts in the fisheries of the Gulf and in Canadian waters increased from $280,000 in 1854 to $1,265,000 in 1856. Similarly, the mackerel fishery increased from 250 vessels, manned by 2,750 men, to 600 vessels, employing 9,000 men, and the value of the catch from $85,000 to

$4,567,000. The gross exchange of natural products between the British provinces and the United States rose from $20,000,000 in 1853, to $84,000,000 in 1866; and during the thirteen years that the treaty was in operation, our exports to the United States were in round figures $267,000,000 and our imports therefrom $363,000,000. Hence, even if we allow for the inflated prices which prevailed during the war of the rebellion, it is still manifest that a free American market is of great consequence to this country, and that we cannot easily over-estimate the importance of good commercial relations with the United States.

The treaty was terminated in 1866 at the instance of the American Government. Mr. McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury, in a report to Congress in 1865 said: "The people of the United States could not consent to be taxed as producers while those outside of our boundaries, exempt from our burdens, shall be permitted as competitors to have full access to our markets." J. W. Ingalls, collector of customs at Cape Vincent, reported: "So far as the trade of this district is an indication of the relative advantages of the reciprocity treaty to the two countries interested, they are in about the proportion of twenty to one in favour of Canada. . . . It appears that our imports of dutiable and free goods before and since the treaty was in about the proportion of one to twenty, while our exports of the same before and since, show the proportion of

twenty to one. In other words we offer a premium of 95 per cent. of our former revenue for Canadian competition in our markets while they pay to us but 5 per cent. of theirs to compete with them in their markets." It was contended at Washington that Canada had not fairly observed the terms of the convention. In 1858 and 1859 higher customs duties were imposed upon manufactures, the duties upon cottons were increased from 15 per cent. to 20 per cent., and upon iron from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. Protests came alike from Westminster and from Washington. The new tariffs and the general bearings and results of the treaty were investigated by commissioners acting in behalf of the Washington Government. George W. Brega, one of these commissioners, reported that the free navigation of the St. Lawrence was a matter of necessity in view of the immense growth of the great North-West. He represented that the principal reason for the termination of the reciprocity treaty was not so much a consideration of inequality in its provisions—for these might have been amended without going to the extent of abrogating the convention—as the fact that the rebellion had forced upon the United States a condition of things which did not exist when the treaty was made, and which rendered its continuance an embarrassment in the arrangement of their complex tariff system. He, however, declared in favour of re-opening commercial intercourse with

the British provinces. Israel T. Hatch, another of these commissioners, found that "during six months when the St. Lawrence route is open it is seldom safe, owing to strong currents, immense masses of ice, and fogs almost perpetual." He contended that "viewed as a question of national integrity, the conduct of the Canadian Parliament in taxing the products of American industry almost to their exclusion from the province must be pronounced to be a violation, not only of the letter and spirit of the treaty, but of the amity and good faith in which it was conceived."[1] He reported, therefore, in favour of abrogation. The position of the Canadian Government was clearly set forth by A. T. Galt, Canadian Minister of Finance, in his reply to the remonstrances of the Imperial Government against the protective character of the new Canadian tariff. Mr. Galt said: "The policy of the present Government in re-adjusting the tariff has been, in the first place, to obtain sufficient revenue for the public wants; secondly, to do so in such a manner as would most fairly distribute the additional burdens upon the different classes of the community; and it will undoubtedly be a subject of gratification to the Government if they find the duties absolutely required to meet their engagements should incidentally benefit and encourage the production in the country of many of those articles which we now import."

[1] Executive documents, 40th Congress, 2nd Session.

The United States have never considered the free entry of their natural products into Canada as an adequate equivalent for the free admission of the natural products of Canada into American markets. Hence they held that the very basis of the Treaty of 1854 was violated by the increase of Canadian duties on imported manufactures. Besides, the unfriendly attitude of the official classes of Britain towards the North during the civil war, and occasional manifestations of Southern feeling in Canada, bred resentment at Washington, and disposed Northern politicians to punish the British provinces by the withdrawal of commercial privileges. Congress, in short, was manifestly determined to abrogate the treaty, or to exact, as the price of its continuance, extraordinary concessions from Canada.[1] In 1862 the Committee of Commerce of

[1] "The causes which led to the repeal of a treaty so largely advantageous to the United States have been long well understood. The commercial classes in the Eastern and Western States were, on the whole, favourable to an enlargement of the treaty, so as to bring in British Columbia and Vancouver Island, now colonies of the Crown, and to include certain other articles, the produce of both countries; but the real cause of its repeal was the prejudice in the North against the provinces for their supposed sympathy for the Confederate States during the war of the rebellion. A large body of men in the North believed that the repeal of the treaty would sooner or later force the provinces into annexation, and a bill was actually introduced in the House of Representatives providing for the admission of those countries—a mere political straw, it is true, but still showing the current of opinion in some quarters in those days."—"Canada and the United States," an historical retrospect by Sir John Bourinot.

"If there was one thing more than another, apart from the irritation growing out of the events which happened during the late war, which

the House of Representatives proposed to supersede the treaty with a commercial Zollverein, but Mr. Galt intimated that "the project of an American Zollverein, to which the British provinces should become parties, is one wholly inconsistent with the maintenance of their connection with Great Britain, and also opposed on its own merits to the interest of the people of these provinces."[1]

Opinion in the United States was by no means unanimous for the abrogation of the treaty. At the instance of the Board of Trade of Montreal, the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York in 1865 undertook an investigation into conditions under the treaty, and prepared a luminous and exhaustive report on trade relations between the British provinces and the United States. The select committee appointed to conduct the investigation addressed letters of inquiry to the Boards of Trade in the cities chiefly interested in trade with Canada, and the replies received were incorporated in the report. The Board of Trade of Philadelphia declared unanimously for the abrogation of the treaty,

instigated them in abrogating the reciprocity treaty, it was the belief that they could compel us into a closer political alliance with them. It is, therefore, desirable, and indeed our manifest duty, to show them, not in a spirit of hostility, but certainly in that of independence, that while we value their friendship and value their trade, we will not conform to unreasonable terms, and will not have either our commercial policy or our political allegiance dictated to us by any foreign country."—From the budget speech of A. T. Galt, June 26th, 1866.

[1] Report of the Hon. A. T. Galt, adopted by the Canadian Government, March 17th, 1862.

on the ground that its advantages had been altogether in favour of Great Britain. The Board of Trade of Chicago pronounced the subject one "of great importance," but reported "conflicting views respecting the advantages and disadvantages of the treaty." The Troy Board of Trade declared against abrogation. The Board of Trade of Baltimore held that the general operations of the treaty had been beneficial to both countries, and declared that they would regret to see the arrangement terminated. Some modifications and changes might be needed, but it appeared to the Board that a free exchange with each other of their chief products was desirable, and the mutual concessions granted in the treaty of the free navigation of the St. Lawrence and Lake Michigan, and the right of taking fish on the shores bordering on each country were very important. These privileges, enjoyed for so long a period, could not now be abolished without much inconvenience and perhaps ill-feeling, particularly on the part of the border residents. They, therefore, recommended the continuance of the treaty, with such modifications as the changed conditions of trade might require, and with the object of increasing rather than diminishing the free commercial intercourse then existing under the treaty. The Merchants' Exchange of Bath, Me., reported that the treaty as it stood was satisfactory. They were not in favour of its abrogation nor of negotiating a new convention, and were not aware of any disadvantage

that the United States had suffered under the arrangement.

The committee summarized these various reports, and then proceeded to declare the position of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York. It was pointed out that in 1852 the Chamber had memorialized Congress in favour of a reciprocity treaty with the British provinces; that in 1856 in order to "remove all commercial restrictions on the commerce and navigation of the Canadas and the United States," they had proposed to admit into the respective countries the natural productions and manufactures of both, and to open to their vessels the coasting trade on the intervening waters of the two countries, with "all the advantages that now exist between adjoining States;" and again in 1859 had memorialized Congress to enlarge the operations of the existing Reciprocity Treaty by removing all duties and restrictions on the importations into the United States of all articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the Canadas, and to permit all vessels built in Canada to participate on equal terms in the shipping and coasting trade on the interior lakes and waters intervening between the two countries, and to open to the free and common use of both all coasts, ports, and water communications whenever the British Government reciprocated by a similar enactment.

They said: "Across and far beyond a remarkable natural chain of lakes and rivers, which seems to be

rather a bond than a barrier, there is a country to which we wish well as our fathers did. Its institutions assimilate to ours, and if not entirely so, it is its own business. In the largest degree, the population has with us a common ancestry, and such portions of it as have not, may find among us great numbers of their own language and creed, who have found here their preferred home." They took a liberal view of the new Canadian tariff, to which such strong exception was taken at Washington, and said: "With regard to the duties levied in Canada on American manufactures, Mr. Galt, the present able Minister of Finance of Canada, explained to the Manchester Board of Commerce when he was last in England, that the colony was too poor to bear direct taxation for increasing the revenue, the public debt being $60,000,000, of which $20,000,000 had been expended on canals, and as much more on railways; that the duties of 20 and 10 per cent. on manufactures of textile fabrics were moderate, and for revenue and not for protection; and any further increase would be only to keep pace with the increase of the American tariff caused by the war." They argued that the additional duties laid on American manufactured imports into Canada were still moderate, and were for revenue purposes only; that "with our own present high tariff, we are the last persons who have a right to complain of any similar procedure;" and that, "notwithstanding the provincial duties, our

manufacturers find a large outlet in that direction." The United States could still furnish an immense variety of fabrics which the Canadas needed and could not as yet manufacture for themselves, and in return for this trade could offer the British provinces "their best and nearest markets, great cities on the lakes, greater cities on the ocean, where capital is always ready for the purchase of their products."

The report proceeded: "Looking at these lakes, the Mediterranean of the North, so ingeniously connected by the enterprise of man that they have become almost one, and noticing how far into the interior their cheap and abundant navigation extends, it would seem like shutting our eyes to the gifts of Providence, bestowed in this magnificent and useful form, if, by any short-sighted or narrow policy, we should close them against further progress. It would seem the part of extreme folly, if, after constructing so many iron paths to these reservoirs, which collect from every bay and inlet on their shores the materials for inland distribution or foreign consumption, we should close them now." If the reciprocity arrangement entirely fell, the whole advantage gained from the free navigation of the St. Lawrence would fall with it. In that case the great agricultural interests in the West would be excluded from a natural and cheap outlet they now possessed, and be driven entirely to rely on the American canals, which were choked up

with business already, and required enlargement, at an enormous expense, to do the transportation pressed upon them. It was for the interest, as it was the right, of the cereal and other crop producers in the West, to have, not only a domestic market, but a foreign one near their own boundaries, which would cost nothing but an intelligent appreciation and a proper commercial use of them. It was added that, "To throw away the existing commerce we possess under the treaty, which in the aggregate since 1854 amounts to upwards of $300,000,000, is to ignore the existence of a great country on our borders, our commerce with which is more secure from maritime dangers than any other we possess; and to retire from the full use of the great lakes and rivers emptying into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, their natural outlet, would be an act of very doubtful policy, if not positive injury." The Committee therefore recommended that the policy of the Board founded on sound commercial principles should be maintained, and the Reciprocity Treaty renewed with such just and liberal modifications as would render it still more advantageous to all concerned.[1]

In 1866 the treaty was terminated, and for a time there was just such gloom and apprehension in Canada as prevailed when the Navigation Laws

[1] See Report of the Select Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York on the Reciprocity Treaty as to trade between the British North American provinces and the United States of America, 1865.

were repealed, and the British preferences in favour of colonial products abolished.[1] Few among the public men of Canada then attempted to deny the enormous advantages of free access to American markets, and almost from the very day that the treaty was denounced, the British and Canadian authorities laboured at Washington for its revival, or for the negotiation of some similar measure of reciprocal trade between the two countries. There followed thirty years of vain and impotent diplomacy, thirty years of harsh tariff treatment of Canada, thirty years of gradual relaxation of

[1] The industry of Canada had been largely directed to the supply of the American markets with commodities for home consumption, as well as for foreign exportation, and the repeal in 1866 of the Reciprocity Treaty, under which so vast a trade had grown up, rendered imperatively necessary prompt measures to open new markets for the sale of Canadian produce. These measures were at once taken. Under the influence of the formal notice given by the United States in 1865, of their intention to terminate the treaty, federation of the provinces, then under discussion, was hurried on, and became a *fait accompli* within fifteen months after its repeal. The Intercolonial Railway was at once undertaken, at a cost of over $20,000,000, at the national expense, to secure direct connection to and from the Atlantic Ocean, at Halifax and St. John, on Canadian soil; and the last section of that road will shortly be open for traffic. Commissioners were despatched to the British and other West India Islands, and to South American States, to promote the extension of direct trade between them and the Dominion. The enlargement of the canals, the improvement of the navigation of the Lakes and River St. Lawrence, the construction of the Bay Verte canal, to connect the waters of the Bay of Fundy and the St. Lawrence, the subsidizing of ocean and river steamship lines, and the promotion of the great ship-building and fishery interests, all received a new and vigorous impetus.—From the memorandum of the British Plenipotentiaries appointed to negotiate the Reciprocity Treaty of 1874.

Canadian rights under solemn treaty engagements in order to preserve good relations on this continent and keep the peace between Great Britain and the United States. When John A. Macdonald, George Brown, George E. Cartier, and A. T. Galt visited London in 1865 to discuss the details of Confederation with British Ministers, they urged upon the Imperial Government the importance to Canada of a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, and fruitless representations to this end were made both through the American Minister in London and the British Minister at Washington. During the same year in response to a suggestion from Washington that something could perhaps be accomplished by concurrent legislation, Mr. Galt and Mr. Howland went down to the American capital, and apparently found the temper of the Executive and of Congress not wholly unfavourable to some modification of the imposts upon Canadian products in return for equivalent concessions from Canada. At any rate, the Canadian Government decided to send to Washington a delegation representative of all the provinces which had embraced the scheme of Confederation, and Galt, Howland, Wm. A. Henry, of Nova Scotia, and Albert J. Smith, of New Brunswick, were appointed to conduct the negotiations.

It was in consequence of the agreement made by Galt and Howland with the Ways and Means Committee of Congress to accept a scheme of con-

current legislation instead of a Treaty of Reciprocity that George Brown withdrew from the Coalition Government. He was especially opposed to any arrangement that would give the United States proprietary rights in the Canadian canals, and considered that commercial intercourse, based upon reciprocal legislation would not afford that element of stability which is essential to successful commerce. "I resigned," he said in the Senate some years afterwards, "because I felt very strongly that though we in Canada derived great advantage from the Treaty of 1854, the American people derived still greater advantage from it. I had no objection to that, and was quite ready to renew the old treaty, or even to extend it largely on fair terms of reciprocity. But I was not willing to ask for renewal as a favour to Canada; I was not willing to offer special inducements for renewal without fair concessions in return; I was not willing that the canals and inland waters of Canada should be made the joint property of the United States and Canada, and be maintained at their joint expense; I was not willing that the customs and excise duties of Canada should be assimilated to the prohibitory rates of the United States; and very especially was I unwilling that any such arrangement should be entered into with the United States, dependent upon the frail tenure of reciprocal legislation, repealable at any moment at the caprice of either

party."[1] Mr. Mackenzie in his life of George Brown adds: "There can be no doubt that Mr. Brown felt a personal slight was offered him when Mr. Howland was sent with Mr. Galt on a mission to promote reciprocity—when Mr. Howland, who was not a member of the confederate council on commercial treaties, was sent on such a mission, although Mr. Brown and Mr. Galt were the members of that council."[2]

Nothing, however, resulted from the negotiations at Washington. The terms on this, as on so many other occasions, were such as Canada could not accept. The American proposals provided that only millstones, rags, firewood, grindstones, plasters, and gypsum should be admitted free of duty; that existing fishing arrangements should continue; that the common use of the canals should be enjoyed by both countries on equal terms; that the bonding system should not be disturbed; and that a scale of

[1] Speech of the Hon. George Brown in the Senate, March 5th, 1875.

[2] "Life and Speeches of the Hon. George Brown," by Alexander Mackenzie, page 103.

Sir Francis Hincks in his Budget Speech on March 10th, 1871, said: "Now as to the negotiations at Washington—why, sir, the honourable member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Galt), is the last member in this House who should have said one word upon this subject. The honourable member said that my remarks were an excuse unworthy of a Finance Minister, and talked of the duties which affected our own people, and said the Government should legislate for them only. But, does the honourable gentleman remember the year 1866, when he was negotiating with the Committee of Ways and Means at Washington? When he was carrying on negotiations there with the evident intention of basing our tariff on that of the United States?"

duties should be imposed on all products that were free under the old treaty. This was at best an insignificant advance upon existing arrangements, and as we have said, was summarily rejected by the Canadian Government. Here the question stood in 1868 when the first tariff of the Dominion was adopted, and when first appeared in the schedules the statutory offer of reciprocity in natural products which with modifications to suit changing circumstances was a feature of all Canadian tariffs down to 1894.

In 1869 the Hon. John Rose, Canadian Minister of Finance, attempted to renew negotiations through the British Minister at Washington. Just what proposals were then made in behalf of Canada will probably never be revealed. In the House of Commons in 1870, Mr. Huntington charged that the Canadian Ministers submitted an offer of complete reciprocity in manufactured goods as well as in natural products, and the Hon. George Brown, speaking in the Senate in 1875, declared that: "This *projet* included the cession for a term of years of our fisheries to the United States; the enlargement and enjoyment of our canals; the free enjoyment of the navigation of the St. Lawrence River; the assimilation of our customs and excise duties; the concession of an import duty equal to the internal revenue taxes of the United States; and the free admission into either country of certain manufactures of the other." It will be observed that Mr.

Brown's statement in the Senate does not go as far as that of Mr. Huntington in the House of Commons five years before. Mr. Huntington insisted that he had seen the memorandum which passed between the British and American negotiators, and that the British proposals amounted to complete free trade between Canada and the United States.[1] Mr. Brown speaking in 1875, said that the *projet* included the assimilation of customs and excise duties, and the free admission into either country of certain manufactures of the other. This was something short of absolute free trade, although it approached very nearly to an exclusive commercial partnership between the two countries. Sir Francis Hincks, who had succeeded to the office of Finance Minister, claimed that such communications as had passed at Washington were confidential, and denied that the British proposals were as wide and liberal as Huntington had alleged. Sir John Macdonald also denied that an offer of complete reciprocity was made, or that discrimination against Great Britain was sanctioned. It is understood that the records of the Canadian Privy Council on the subject have disappeared. Mr. Fish, Secretary of State, in reply to an inquiry from the American Senate, said that the conversations held were too informal to be made the subject of an official report,[2]

[1] See reports of the debate in the Toronto *Globe* and the Toronto *Leader*, March 17th, 1870.

[2] Report communicated to the Senate by President Grant, December 22nd, 1869.

and President Grant in his message of December, 1869, said: "The question of renewing a treaty for reciprocal trade between the United States and the British provinces on this continent has not been favourably considered by the Administration. The advantages of such a treaty would be wholly in favour of the British producer. Except, possibly, a few engaged in the trade between the two sections, no citizen of the United States would be benefited by reciprocity. Our internal taxation would prove a protection to the British producer almost equal to the protection which our manufacturers now receive from the tariff. Some arrangement, however, for the regulation of commercial intercourse between the United States and the Dominion of Canada may be desirable."[1] Thus was rejected perhaps the most generous proposition ever submitted in behalf of Canada to the authorities at Washington, and we seem now to have gone far beyond the day when the Canadian people would sanction any such revolutionary arrangement.

Equally abortive was the attempt of Sir John Macdonald and his fellow commissioners to associate reciprocity with the negotiation of the Washington Treaty. The British representatives offered to concede access to the deep sea-fisheries of Canada in return for a renewal of the Treaty of 1854. But the American commissioners declared that that treaty had proved unsatisfactory to the

[1] First annual message of President Grant, December 6th, 1869.

United States, and that its renewal was not in their interests, and would not be in accordance with the sentiments of their people. In 1873, the National Board of Trade of the United States memorialized Congress to appoint a commission to frame a treaty, and the Dominion Board of Trade addressed the Canadian Government to the same effect. But the commission was not appointed, and nothing resulted from the representations of the commercial bodies.

A few months later the Government of Sir John Macdonald resigned office, and a new set of Canadian Ministers, as eager as their predecessors for liberal trade relations between Canada and the United States, turned their faces towards Washington in pursuit of a better commercial understanding between the two countries, and easier access for Canadian products into American markets. The Hon. George Brown was appointed British Plenipotentiary to act with Sir Edward Thornton, then British Minister to the United States. Mr. Brown's appointment was singularly wise. He was the resolute friend of the North during the civil war, and among British statesmen stood only below Bright and Cobden in appreciation of American institutions, and in desire for the integrity of the union. He was, at the same time, aggressively Canadian and heartily British. His patriotism was distinguished for love of his own country rather than for hatred of his neighbour, and that is not the worst temper in which to face

international negotiations. Mr. Brown was also thoroughly impressed with the importance of breaking down trade barriers between Canada and the United States. He always admitted that Canadian trade had greatly prospered under the Treaty of 1854, while insisting, with the logic of a free trader, that the neighbouring States had derived a corresponding benefit from the arrangement. In a letter to Mr. Holton, in 1863, Mr. Brown said, "An immense card, politically, would be a renewal of the United States Reciprocity Treaty. If you can fix that for twenty years, you will give our party a hold on the farmers that will be very difficult to over-estimate."[1] A year afterwards he wrote again to Mr. Holton: "I am much concerned about the Reciprocity Treaty. It appears to me that none of us are sufficiently awake about it. I see very serious trouble ahead if notice of the repeal is given. Such a feeling will be manifested here as will determine the United States to repeal it. They will see then, if they do not now, how essential it is to our prosperity here in Canada, and what many here are prepared to do to secure its re-enactment."[2]

It is manifest, therefore, that although Mr. Brown withdrew from the Coalition Government rather than countenance the scheme of concurrent legislation, he set a high value upon the Treaty of 1854, and was eager for its renewal, or for the negotiation

[1] Mackenzie's "Life of George Brown," page 206.

[2] Mackenzie's "Life of George Brown," page 208.

of some similar arrangement with the United States. Mr. Brown was authorized by the Government to offer a limited reciprocity in manufactures, and an unlimited reciprocity in natural products, and also to pledge Canada to deepen the canals in return for reciprocity in the coasting trade. There was, however, to be no discrimination against Great Britain, and the schedule of manufactures was to cover only "articles not produced in or exported from Great Britain to this country, together with such other articles as the Imperial and Dominion Governments may eventually agree upon, or as may by mutual arrangement be entered at a fixed duty to be specified in the treaty." Sir Edward Thornton and Mr. Brown laboured with admirable tact and diligence to effect an arrangement under these conditions, and at length a draft treaty for twenty-one years was framed by the joint negotiators. It was in the main a generous and statesmanlike adjustment of the commercial relations between the two countries. The draft treaty put lumber and coal and all farm products on the free list, and struck off the duties from agricultural implements, axles, boots and shoes, boot and shoe-making machines; buffalo robes, cotton grain bags, cotton denims, cotton jeans, unbleached; cotton drillings, unbleached; cotton plaids, cotton ticking, cottonades, unbleached; cabinet-ware and furniture; felt covering for boilers; gutta percha belting and tubing; carriages, carts, waggons, and other wheeled

vehicles and sleighs; fire-engines; iron—bar, hoop, pig, puddled, rod, sheet, or scrap; iron nails, spikes, bolts, tacks, brads, or springs; iron castings; India rubber belting and tubing; locomotives for railways, or parts thereof; lead, sheet or pig; leather, sole or upper; leather, harness and saddlery; mill or factory or steamboat fixed engines and machines, or parts thereof; manufactures of marble, stone, slate or granite; manufactures of wood solely, or of wood nailed, bound, hinged, or locked with metal materials; mangles, washing machines, wringing machines, and drying machines; printing paper; paper-making machines; printing-type, presses and folders, paper cutters, ruling machines, page numbering machines, and stereotyping and electrotyping apparatus; refrigerators; satinets of wool and cotton; steam engines; railroad cars, carriages and trucks; steel, wrought or cast, and steel plates and rails; tin tubes and piping; tweeds, of wool solely, and water-wheel machines and apparatus.

Canada also undertook to concede the free use of the fisheries for twenty-one years; to abandon the arbitration then proceeding under the Washington Treaty; to enlarge the Welland and St. Lawrence canals; and to construct the Caughnawaga and Whitehall canals. It was further agreed that each country should enjoy equal rights in the coasting-trade of the inland lakes and of the St. Lawrence River; to concede to each on equal terms the use of the Canadian, New York, and Michigan canals;

to admit vessels built in either country to all the advantages of registry in the other; to organize a joint commission to secure the efficient lighting of the inland waters common to both countries; and finally to appoint a joint commission to promote the protection and propagation of fish in such waters. It was also provided that the manufactures covered by the treaty should be subject to a sliding scale, under which the imposts were to be reduced by one-third each year until complete abolition was effected.[1]

This was a liberal and comprehensive arrangement, and it seems impossible to argue that it gave the balance of advantage to Canada. Naturally, the manufacturers' schedule aroused serious opposition

[1] The article of the proposed treaty which meets most opposition on this side is that which provides for the gradual extinction of duties on the manufactures which it is proposed to make free between Canada and the United States, after the 30th June, 1877. During the fiscal year ending June, 1876, each country would be entitled to charge two-thirds of its present duty; the next year one-third. To start with, the inequality of the duties is very great—say 17 to 50, for illustration and not as an exact comparison—and the proposal for gradually extinguishing them continues the disproportion. Many fear that during this period of transition, American manufacturers would gain control of our market, and extinguish our young and struggling manufactures by the aid of this discriminating duty; and this fear cannot be regarded as idle or groundless. The existing inequality would be greatly aggravated. The American manufacturers can almost command our markets at present; if the duties be lowered on our side, without an equal chance of competition being given in their market, there is much reason to fear the effect of three years' discrimination against our infant manufactures would be fatal. This is, beyond all doubt, a very serious feature of the proposed treaty.—*The Nation*, July 9th, 1874.

in this country, and there was keen and powerful criticism of the magnitude of the engagements assumed by Canada under the draft treaty. The manufacturing and mercantile interests strongly opposed the arrangement, while the shipping interest was divided. In the East the failure to secure reciprocity in the Atlantic coasting trade caused grave dissatisfaction. The Dominion Board of Trade, by a vote of twenty-seven to six, declared that the privileges conceded were greater than the privileges obtained. A convention of manufacturers at Hamilton pronounced against the treaty. They objected to the arrangement on the ground that it was a departure from the policy for many years maintained in Canada of encouraging home industries, which policy was almost unanimously upheld by both the agricultural and commercial interests, as well as by the manufacturing interests. Should the treaty go into operation it would bring about a social and commercial crisis, attended with ruin to many. The admission of both English and American goods into Canada free of duty would have a serious effect on many industries, close up many manufacturing establishments, reduce the population, contract the general trade of the country, and affect inevitably agricultural as well as commercial interests.

The sliding scale was denounced, and it was represented that the effect of the treaty would be to reduce the cost of production in the United

States and to increase the cost of production in Canada, thereby destroying the advantages which Canada possessed in cheapness of manufacturing. If there should be serious loss of revenue from the admission free of goods from both England and the United States while we were involved in heavy expenditures for public works, to which we were already pledged, heavy direct taxation would be inevitable. This would be a hardship to the agricultural population far more than counterbalancing any benefits which could be derived from the treaty. While it was desirable to improve our canals to such extent as was practicable, it was a rash undertaking to be bound by treaty to this obligation, without regard to contingencies, especially as the American Government engaged merely to make recommendations to the authorities of certain States in support of reciprocal privileges in American canals. The American patent laws would come between the manufacturers of Canada and those of the United States, and many Canadian manufacturers would find themselves as effectually excluded from the American market by these laws as by prohibitory duties levied at the custom house. Certain clauses of the treaty were open to conflicting interpretations, and these doubtful points would be construed by the American Government in favour of its own citizens and against foreigners. The Caughnawaga canal would tend to divert trade from the St. Lawrence to Boston and New York,

and thereby increase the cost of freight to and from our seaboard ports, and cripple and diminish our direct trade with other countries. The treaty, in short, would cause a great disturbance of business generally, weaken the manufacturing interests, seriously injure the farmers' home market, and bring loss upon merchants through the failure of accustomed markets and non-employment of many persons.[1]

But there was still a great body of opinion in favour of the arrangement, and its acceptance at Washington would have strengthened the Mackenzie Administration, and perhaps averted the protectionist movement which carried the Conservative leaders back to office. The draft treaty was not even considered by Congress. The message with which President Grant sent the draft to the Senate was guarded and inconclusive. The President said, "The Plenipotentiaries of Her Britannic Majesty at Washington have submitted to the Secretary of State for my consideration a draft of a treaty for the reciprocal regulation of the commerce and trade between the United States and Canada, with provisions for the enlargement of the Canadian canals and for their use by United States vessels on terms of equality with British vessels. I am of the opinion that a proper treaty for such purposes would result beneficially for the United States. It

[1] See report of the meeting of the Ontario Industrial Association at Hamilton, August 12th-13th, 1874.

would not only open or enlarge markets for our products, but it would increase the facilities of transportation from the grain-growing States of the West to the seaboard. The proposed draft has many features to commend it to our favourable consideration, but whether it makes all the concessions which could justly be required of Great Britain, or whether it calls for more concessions from the United States than we should yield I am not prepared to say. Among the provisions are articles proposing to dispense with the arbitration respecting the fisheries, which was provided for by the Treaty of Washington, in the event of the conclusion and ratification of a treaty and the passage of all the legislation necessary to enforce it. These provisions, as well as other considerations, make it desirable that this subject should receive attention before the close of the present session. I therefore express an earnest wish that the Senate may be able to consider and determine before the adjournment of Congress whether it will give its constitutional concurrence to the conclusion of a treaty with Great Britain for the purposes already named, either in such form as is proposed by the British Plenipotentiaries or in such other more acceptable form as the Senate may prefer."[1] The draft treaty reached the Senate only two days before adjournment. It was taken up in secret session and returned to the President with the advice that it was inexpedient to proceed with

[1] Special message of President Grant to Congress, June 18th, 1874.

its consideration. Thus the measure died on the threshold of Congress, and it was to know no resurrection. The abrupt and inconsiderate action of the Senate was resented in Canada, and was one among the many reasons which led the Canadian people to accept the policy of protection and to welcome the increase of duties on American products.

Sir John Macdonald was always conscious of the strength of Canadian feeling for reciprocal trade relations with the United States. No one was less disposed than the Conservative leader to undervalue the treaty of 1854. He had said in 1860 that one great cause of the prosperity of the farmer in Upper Canada was the Reciprocity Treaty and the consequent interchange of agricultural commodities and raw materials. He said years afterwards that the Government which negotiated the treaty had done an important service to Canada. He was more than willing when the Washington Treaty was under negotiation to yield the fisheries for reciprocal trade privileges. The question was adroitly handled by the Conservative politicians during the protectionist campaign. The argument for protection was associated with the desire for reciprocity. A national policy of protection, said Sir John Macdonald's resolution of 1878, "will prevent Canada from being made a sacrifice market, will encourage and develop an active interprovincial trade, and moving as it ought to do, in the direction of

reciprocity of tariffs with our neighbours so far as the varied interests of Canada may demand, will greatly tend to procure for this country eventually reciprocity of trade."[1] In a speech made at Simcoe on September 27th, 1876, he declared that he was in favour of "reciprocal free trade" if it could be obtained, but that so long as the United States closed their markets to Canada we should consult only our own interests.[2] This was the keynote of a spirited and sagacious campaign, and there is hardly any doubt that thousands of farmers accepted protection in the hope that increase of Canadian duties would incline the statesmen at Washington to seek a reciprocity arrangement with the British provinces. The temper of Washington, however, was otherwise affected, and for many years thereafter there was no serious negotiation for better commercial intercourse between the two countries. The Canadian tariff of 1879 embodied the standing offer of reciprocity in natural products, but no one expected that any such limited arrangement would be accepted by the United States. In 1880 Congressman Cox, of New York, then chairman of the House Committee on foreign affairs, reported a bill for the appointment of a commission to consider trade relations between Canada and the Republic, but it was not adopted. Here, as at Washington,

[1] Hansard, March 7th, 1878, page 854.

[2] Lieut.-Col. J. P. Macpherson's "Life of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. II., page 215.

reciprocity of tariffs seemed to be accepted as the settled commercial policy, and for a time the argument for reciprocity of trade was a very minor feature of the sustained Liberal attack upon the system of protection.[1]

[1] The Montreal *Star* Almanac for 1897 has a compact and comprehensive review of trade negotiations between Canada and the United States from 1854 to 1892 by Mr. A. H. U. Colquhoun.

CHAPTER XX

TRADE AND THE FISHERIES

IT was in connection with the fisheries that the question of Reciprocity was revived. If Canadians have always sought access to the markets of the United States, the American Government has been just as anxious to secure fishing privileges in British waters. On the Atlantic coast, by treaty, by agreement, and in part by custom, American fishermen had from the time of the Declaration of Independence certain privileges. By the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, Americans were allowed to fish on the grand bank and other banks of Newfoundland, and were permitted to dry and cure fish in the unsettled bays, harbours, and creeks of Nova Scotia so long as these remained unsettled. Privileges were also conferred to take and cure fish on certain well-defined portions of the British North American coast. The Treaty of Versailles was annulled by the war of 1812, and under the Treaty of Ghent of 1814 there were no provisions for the participation of Americans in the North Atlantic fisheries. In 1818, a treaty was negotiated under which the Americans practically surrendered the inshore fisheries south of the Strait of Belle Isle. Many disputes arose as to the proper interpretation of the clauses

of this treaty which forbade the Americans to enter bays and harbours except for the purpose of repairs, and for procuring wood and water; and as to whether the word bay meant all bays, including the Bay of Fundy and the Bay of Chaleurs, as claimed by Nova Scotia, or whether American vessels should be excluded only from bays that were less than six miles wide at the mouth. In effect, the Americans claimed the right of fishing anywhere except within three miles from the land, while Nova Scotia claimed that the line should be drawn from headland to headland, no matter how wide the bay might be, and that fishing should not be carried on within three miles from the coast line as so defined.

In 1845, the British Government, while insisting upon its right to exclude American fishermen from all bays, relaxed that right so far as the Bay of Fundy was concerned. The question, however, continued to be one of great difficulty, and there were many infractions of the three mile limit. By the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 the trouble was ended for a time, and fishing vessels of the United States were permitted to enter British North American ports on the same terms as British fishing vessels. This treaty, as we have seen, was terminated in 1866 at the instance of the United States, and in consequence the privileges of American fishermen in the Canadian inshore fisheries ceased, and the Treaty of 1818 was revived.

But whenever a treaty is denounced or a treaty rejected at Washington, Canada is forced to make conciliatory arrangements, and to accept sacrificial compromises in order to temper American opinion and preserve international good neighbourhood. In this case it was agreed between the Canadian and Imperial authorities that, on payment of a license fee of $1.00 per ton, Americans should continue to fish in Canadian waters until some more satisfactory settlement could be effected. For a few years the fee was paid by many of the American fishermen, and then gradually the regulation was ignored, payments discontinued, and the fishing grounds occupied as freely and boldly by unlicensed Americans as by the fishermen of Canada. Hence the necessity for the negotiation of the Treaty of Washington. But unfortunately for Canada the settlement of the claims of the United States against Great Britain for losses inflicted upon American commerce by Confederate cruisers fitted out in British ports during the civil war, rather than the protection of Canadian fishing interests, was the main concern of the British negotiators; and the preservation of good relations with the United States, even at the expense of Canada, was the determined policy of the Home Government. The story of the negotiations is well told in Sir John Macdonald's private correspondence, which forms the most pregnant chapters in Mr. Pope's life of the Conservative statesman, and forever

vindicates him from the charge of recreancy to Canadian interests.[1]

The essential terms of the treaty as finally settled provided for the free admission into the United States of salt-water fish as a partial equivalent for the free access of American fishing vessels to the Canadian fisheries; the concession to the United States of the free navigation of the St. Lawrence in return for the free use of Lake Michigan and the rivers Yukon, Stikine, and Porcupine in Alaska; and an agreement to determine by arbitration the value of the Canadian fisheries in excess of the privileges conceded by the United States. In consequence of the failure in the Senate of the draft treaty of reciprocity negotiated by Mr. Brown and Sir Edward Thornton, this arbitration became necessary, and the result was an award in favour of Canada and Newfoundland for $5,500,000, for twelve years use of the inshore fisheries as the excess value of our fisheries to the United States above the American concessions under the treaty. This result was not well received at Washington, and in the general opinion of the American press and of American politicians, represented an excessive valuation of the Canadian fisheries. It was inevitable that the clauses of the treaty under which the award was made would not be accepted by the American authorities as a per-

[1] Joseph Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. II., pages 85-140.

manent arrangement, and in 1885, in consonance with American opinion, they were terminated by Congress. This threw Canada back upon the convention of 1818, and the Canadian Government entered upon a vigorous enforcement of the terms of the treaty. American vessels were not allowed to fish within the three mile limit, nor to tranship cargoes of fish in Canadian ports, nor to enter such ports for any purpose except for shelter, wood, water, and repairs. Not a few American vessels were seized, some were condemned, and all craft seeking to poach upon the Canadian fishing grounds were vexed and harassed by the Government cruisers. There was some opinion in Canada that the operations of the protective fleet were unnecessarily spirited, and in the United States there was harsh characterization of the treaty of 1818, and angry denunciation of the policy of the Canadian authorities. It was contended that the spirit of the old treaty was harsh, coercive, and unneighbourly; that its provisions were repugnant to the relations which should exist between friendly communities, and represented the temper of a barbaric era; and that Canada's attitude was aggressive, defiant, and obnoxious to the prestige and dignity of the United States. There is no doubt the situation was full of danger, and that at any moment an accidental unlawful seizure, or the sacrifice of life in some petty quarrel between a fishing vessel and a Canadian cruiser might bring Great Brit-

ain and the United States to the very verge of hostilities.

The action of President Cleveland under the circumstances was praiseworthy and statesmanlike. In his first message to Congress he said: "In the interest of good neighbourhood and of the commercial intercourse of adjacent communities, the question of the North American fisheries is one of much importance;" and he therefore recommended that "Congress provide for the appointment of a commission, in which the Governments of the United States and Great Britain shall be respectively represented, charged with the consideration and settlement upon a just and equitable basis of the entire question of the fishing rights of the two Governments and their respective citizens on the coasts of the United States and British North America." He added: "The fishing interests being intimately related to other general questions dependent upon contiguity and intercourse, consideration thereof in all their equities might also properly come within the purview of such a commission, and the fullest latitude of expression on both sides should be permitted."[1] The President's recommendations were rejected by Congress, and, therefore, in his second annual message he returned to the subject. He now intimated that negotiations had been instituted with the British Government

[1] President Cleveland's first annual message to Congress, Dec. 8th, 1885.

for such joint interpretation and definition of the article of the Convention of 1818, relating to the territorial waters and inshore fisheries of the British provinces, as should secure the Canadian rights from encroachment by United States fishermen, and at the same time insure the enjoyment by the latter of the privileges guaranteed to them by the convention. He said that while he was unfeignedly desirous that good relations should exist between the United States and the inhabitants of Canada, "yet the action of their officials during the past season toward our fishermen has been such as to seriously threaten their continuance."[1] Two days later, in a special message, he recommended that "a commission be authorized by law to take perpetuating proofs of the losses sustained during the past year by American fishermen, owing to their unfriendly and unwarranted treatment by the local authorities of the Maritime Provinces of the Dominion of Canada."[2]

But Congress, the bane of negotiations with the United States, responsive to organized interests and sensitive to popular clamour, ordered a more heroic settlement, and on March 3rd, 1887, passed a retaliatory act which provided that whenever the President should be satisfied that American vessels were illegally, unjustly, or vexatiously restricted or harassed in the exercise of their business,

[1] Message to Congress, Dec. 6th, 1886.

[2] Special message to Congress, Dec. 8th, 1886.

or denied the privileges accorded to the most favoured nation in respect to touching or trading by the authorities of the British North American Dominions, he might, by proclamation, close the ports and waters of the United States against the vessels and products of all or any part of the British provinces. Under all the circumstances this was mischievous and ungenerous, and the action of Congress naturally excited apprehension in Great Britain and indignation in Canada. If Mr. Cleveland had stood less firm and resolute we should have had commercial war at once, and actual war in the near distance. But the President refused to exercise the power put into his hands by the retaliatory act of Congress, and arranged with Great Britain for the appointment of a commission to adjust points of dispute under the treaty of 1818, and for a more satisfactory settlement of the relations between Canada and the United States.

The British commissioners appointed to conduct this negotiation were Sir Lionel Sackville-West, Sir Charles Tupper, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. As in 1871 and 1874, Canada sought to associate the question of reciprocal trade with the question of the fisheries. On July 1st, 1885, the fishery clauses of the treaty of Washington were terminated, and at once fish-oil and fish of all kinds which had passed free into the United States became subject to customs duties, although the Canadian Govern-

ment generously agreed to extend to American vessels the fishing privileges enjoyed under the treaty until the close of the season. This *modus vivendi*, according to the correspondence between the British Minister at Washington and Mr. Bayard, Secretary of State, was reached with the understanding that, "The agreement has been arrived at under circumstances affording prospect of negotiation for development and extension of trade between the United States and British North America." Mr. Foster, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, in a report to the Privy Council of June 14th, 1886, in explanation and defence of the right of Canada to enforce the provisions of the London Convention, said: "The undersigned would express the hope that the discussion which has arisen in this question may lead to renewed negotiations between Great Britain and the United States, and may have the result of establishing extended trade relations between the Republic and Canada, and of removing all sources of irritation between the two countries."[1] It is declared in a report of the Privy Council of February 1st, 1887, that the Government of Canada was not only ready to consent to the appointment of a commission to determine the limits of the territorial waters within which, subject to the treaty of 1818, the exclusive right of fishing belonged to Great Britain, but also to enter into such other arrangements as would extend the

[1] Correspondence relative to the Fisheries Question, 1885-87, page 84.

commercial relations existing between the two countries.[1]

The Blue Book also gives an interesting unofficial correspondence between Mr. Bayard and Sir Charles Tupper. The American Secretary of State, in a letter to the Canadian Minister, dated May 31st, 1887, said: "I am confident that we both seek to attain a just and permanent settlement, and there is but one way to procure it, and that is by a straightforward treatment on a liberal and statesmanlike plan of the entire commercial relations of the two countries. I feel we stand at 'the parting of the ways.' In one direction I can see a well-assured, steady, healthful relationship, devoid of petty jealousies and filled with the fruits of a prosperity arising out of a friendship cemented by mutual interests, and enduring because based upon justice; on the other, a career of embittered rivalries, staining our long frontier with the hues of hostility, in which victory means the destruction of an adjacent prosperity without gain to the prevalent party—a mutual physical and moral deterioration which ought to be abhorrent to patriots on both sides, and which I am sure no two men will exert themselves more to prevent than the parties to this unofficial correspondence." Sir Charles Tupper said in reply that he "entirely concurred in the statement that the one way to attain a just and permanent settlement was by a straightforward

[1] Correspondence relative to the Fisheries Question, 1885-87, page 218.

treatment on a liberal and statesmanlike plan of the entire commercial relations of the two countries."[1]

Accordingly, at an early stage of the negotiations, Sir Charles Tupper submitted a proposition for an adjustment of the questions at issue on the basis of freer and wider trade relations. He proposed that, "with the view of removing all causes of difference in connection with the fisheries," the fishermen of both countries should have all the privileges enjoyed during the existence of the fishery articles of the treaty of Washington, in consideration of a mutual arrangement providing for greater freedom of commercial intercourse between the United States and Canada and Newfoundland. The proposition was rejected by the American Plenipotentiaries. They said that only Congress could remove customs duties; that on account of the inhospitable conduct of Canada towards American fishermen, the Senate and House of Representatives had authorized the President to declare non-intercourse with the British provinces; and that their representatives would never purchase immunity for their fishermen by reciprocal trade arrangements, and particularly while they entertained the conviction that Canada had adopted an aggressive and unneighbourly policy in order to force reciprocity upon the United States.[2]

[1] Correspondence relative to the Fisheries Question, 1887-88, pages 60-61.

[2] Speech of Sir Charles Tupper in the House of Commons, April 10th, 1888.

We cannot know what measure of continental free trade Sir Charles Tupper contemplated. There was an impression at the time that he was prepared to agree to a more liberal reciprocity treaty than suited many of the Conservatives in Parliament. During the debate on the address in the House of Commons in 1899, Sir Wilfrid Laurier declared that Sir Charles Tupper was the only Canadian, so far as he knew, who in negotiation with the Americans had "offered to barter away certain privileges on the basis of unrestricted reciprocity." Sir Charles Tupper denied that he had made an offer of unrestricted reciprocity, but practically admitted that he had made an "unrestricted offer of reciprocity;" and this Sir Wilfrid Laurier interpreted as "reciprocity without restriction."[1] It is safe to say that the Canadian Government would have consented to a generous reciprocal arrangement; and as the Liberals had now made reciprocity the main feature of their programme, the extreme protectionists in the Conservative party would have had no option but to accept whatever agreement Sir Charles Tupper might make at Washington.

The treaty, however, as finally drafted, contained no provisions for wider commercial intercourse. The instrument defined the limit between the inshore and deep sea fisheries so as to exclude American vessels from all bays ten miles wide at the mouth, and expressly shut out American fisher-

[1] Hansard, March 21st, 1899, pages 102-103.

men from certain bays ranging from fifteen to twenty miles in width at the mouth, such as the Bay of Chaleurs, Fortune Bay, and St. Anne's Bay. Free navigation of the Strait of Canso was conceded to all fishing vessels of the United States, and permission was given to American vessels under stress of weather or accident to unload, re-load, tranship or sell in Canadian ports subject to customs laws and regulations. Pending the ratification of the treaty, a *modus vivendi* was arranged providing that upon payment of a license fee of $1.50 per ton American fishing vessels might enter the bays and harbours of Canada and Newfoundland to purchase supplies, tranship their catch, and ship crews. There were also provisions for reciprocity in fish and fish products, but these were not actually embodied in the treaty, and were dependent upon concurrent legislation by Congress and by the Canadian Parliament.

President Cleveland, in his message of February 20th, 1888, recommending the treaty to the Senate, said: "The treaty now submitted contains no provisions affecting tariff duties, and, independently of the position assumed upon the part of the United States that no alteration in our tariff or other domestic legislation could be made as the price or consideration of obtaining the rights of our citizens secured by treaty, it was considered more expedient to allow any change in the revenue laws of the United States to be made by the ordinary exercise

of legislative will and in the promotion of the public interests. Therefore, the addition to the free list of fish, fish-oil, whale and seal-oil, etc., recited in the last article of the treaty, is wholly left to the action of Congress; and in connection therewith the Canadian and Newfoundland right to regulate sales of bait and other fishing supplies within their own jurisdiction is recognized, and the right of our fishermen to freely purchase these things is made contingent by this treaty upon the action of Congress in the modification of our tariff laws." He said further that, "The treaty now submitted to you has been framed in a spirit of liberal equity and reciprocal benefits, in the conviction that mutual advantage and convenience are the only permanent foundation of peace and friendship between states, and that with the adoption of the agreement now placed before the Senate, a beneficial and satisfactory intercourse between the two countries will be established, so as to secure perpetual peace and harmony." But the Senate rejected even this liberal and beneficial agreement; and, during all the years that have since elapsed, American fishing vessels have been licensed and permitted to purchase supplies and tranship their catch in Canadian waters, and Canada, in the interests of international comity and good neighbourhood, has foregone great and undoubted rights under the London Convention. The treaty was ratified by the Parliament of Canada, and was not directly challenged by the

Liberal party. It was argued by the press and the spokesmen of the party that adequate concessions had not been received from the United States, and that the spirit which the Government had manifested in the enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of 1818 was calculated to inflame American opinion, and determine Congress to reject all proposals for freer commercial intercourse. Mr. Laurier stated the policy of the Opposition in these words: "We will adopt this treaty because it is the best thing which can be obtained under the circumstances, because it puts an end to the state of things which has been created by the policy of gentlemen on the other side, and because it paves the way to obtain those trade relations which the whole people of Canada desire."[1]

In 1889, Mr. Laurier moved an amendment to supply declaring that, in view of the rejection of the treaty by the United States Senate, and the unfortunate and regrettable differences existing between Canada and the United States on the fishery and trade questions, steps should be taken by the Government for the satisfactory adjustment of such differences, and the securing of unrestricted freedom in the trade relations of the two countries; that in any negotiations entered upon for such purposes Canada should be directly represented by some one nominated by its Government; and that in the meantime, and to afford evidence of the

[1] Hansard, April 16th, 1888, page 854.

anxious desire of Canada to promote good feeling and to remove all possible subjects of controversy, the *modus vivendi*, proposed on behalf of the British Government to the Government of the United States with respect to the fisheries, should be continued in operation during the ensuing fishing season.[1] The motion was rejected. The *modus vivendi* continues, and better trade relations have not been established. Upon the whole, the treaty of 1888 was a prudent and comprehensive settlement of delicate and difficult questions, conceived in a spirit of generous regard for international obligations, and of statesmanlike recognition of the supreme importance of good relations between Great Britain and the United States; and, if the spirit which animated Ottawa and Westminster had been reciprocated at Washington, the treaty would have gone into effect, and at least one great step would have been taken towards the realization of Mr. Bayard's vision of "a well-assured, steady, healthful relationship, devoid of petty jealousies, and filled with the fruits of a prosperity arising out of a friendship cemented by mutual interests, and enduring because based upon justice."[2]

[1] Hansard, February 26th, 1889, page 328.

[2] The late Sir John Bourinot's "British Rule in Canada" has an instructive chapter on treaty negotiations between Canada and the United States; and Mr. Thomas Hodgins' "British and American Diplomacy affecting Canada, 1782-1899," is a careful, scholarly, and comprehensive review of the international relations of the two countries.

CHAPTER XXI

COMMERCIAL UNION

DURING 1887, the agitation for "Commercial Union" with the United States made substantial headway, particularly in Ontario, and commanded the services of some powerful and distinguished advocates. The controversy was keen and bitter, the note of continentalism had distinct utterance, and it may be that the movement bred annexationist sentiment. But it is not at all clear that political union with the United States was the avowed or even the secret object of the chief spokesmen of the movement; and certainly political union was distasteful to the mass of Canadians who accepted the policy as the only practicable basis of freer trade with the neighbouring country.

Conditions were peculiarly favourable to the propagation of the theories of the commercial unionists. Trade was depressed. Prices of agricultural products were low and tending downward. The ratio of settlement in the North-West was unsatisfactory. The home market had not expanded in sympathy with the increase of manufacturing establishments. There was serious interprovincial discord rising out of the execution of Riel and the effervescence of French nationalism in Quebec. Sectarian feeling in

Ontario was excited by attacks upon the separate school system, and the use of the French language in the schools of the French districts. The American Congress was threatening non-intercourse in revenge for Canada's enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of 1818. All the counter-tendencies and inherent difficulties of our situation were emphasized and exaggerated to serve the particular purposes of eager sectarians and warring factions. It was a time of gloom and doubt, of suspicion and unrest, of rash opinion and premature judgment, of failing faith in our institutions, of hostile examination of the central props and pillars of the national edifice.

Such experiences are not uncommon in the evolution of free communities. Nations are of slow growth, and a common sentiment and community of interest are seldom the immediate product of a political alliance and a constitution. The birth of the American union was through revolution, but even in those fires an enduring national principle was not generated. During the war of 1812 the country was rent by faction, and whole communities trembled on the verge of resistance to the executive authority. Fifteen or twenty years later, the nullification movement swept over the South, and the planter States drifted to the edge of revolt. Then came years of fretting and irritation, and at last the desperate crisis of the rebellion; and it is only now in the conquered South that a genuine

patriotism has supplanted the narrower idea of State sovereignty. We have within the Canadian Confederation a vast stretch of territory, and serious natural and economic hindrances to the harmonious growth of a common sentiment. We have had a strenuous race rivalry and an enduring creed quarrel. We have had slow growth of population, long neglect of our wealth of mine, and field, and forest, wide ignorance of the temper of our climate and the extent of our productive territory, and, beyond all, the irresistible competition of the United States for the world's notice, the world's people, and the world's capital. It is not surprising, therefore, that we have had periods of gloom and discouragement, and that now and then counsels of despair have influenced considerable elements of our population. We caught sometimes the note of despair in the campaign of the commercial unionists, and sometimes a tone of contempt for deeply cherished sentiments which seriously prejudiced the movement.

Among the chief organizers and promoters of this agitation were Mr. Henry W. Darling, then president of the Toronto Board of Trade; Mr. Goldwin Smith, the eminent historian and scholar; Mr. Valancey E. Fuller, of Wentworth, president of the Council of Farmers' Institutes; Mr. Erastus Wiman, of New York; and Congressman Butterworth, of Ohio. When Congress passed the Non-Intercourse Act in protest against Canada's active enforcement of the London Convention, Mr. Butterworth

submitted to the House of Representatives a bill for the settlement of all outstanding questions between the two countries on the basis of a Zollverein. It is not unlikely that Mr. Butterworth acted at the instance of Mr. Wiman; and we have the statement of Sir Charles Tupper that it was at the suggestion of Mr. Wiman that he visited Washington and opened the negotiations which led to the appointment of the Fisheries Commission.[1]

Mr. Wiman was a Canadian by birth, and in his early years a successful journalist. He removed to New York, established important commercial enterprises, and at length was seized with the large and honourable ambition to improve the relations between the land of his birth and the land of his adoption. He had, however, never renounced his British citizenship; and there is fair evidence that he laboured, whether wisely or unwisely, not to change the political relations, but to better the commercial relations between Canada and the United States. With much vigour of pen and tongue and some originality of method, he pressed Mr. Butterworth's bill upon Congress, and at intervals came to Canada and addressed many meetings in favour of commercial union. Mr. Wiman was a fluent and persuasive speaker, he had thoroughly mastered the economic relationships of the two

[1] Speech of Sir Charles Tupper in the House of Commons on the Fisheries Treaty, April 10th, 1888.

countries, and rarely revealed the economist's contempt for popular sympathies and popular prejudices. Still, it is doubtful if his advocacy was particularly effective in either country. He was prejudiced in the United States by his failure to accept American citizenship, and prejudiced in Canada by the fact of residence in New York, and natural identification with the commercial interests of the Republic.

In Canada, Mr. Goldwin Smith was the active and dominant spirit of the movement. His eminence in the world of letters, the elegance of his written word, his breadth of historical vision and luminous exposition of the teaching of the economists, invested his advocacy with singular charm and effectiveness. But Mr. Goldwin Smith is not always a faithful interpreter of Canadian sentiment. The Canadian people reverence his learning, respect his courage, and honour his integrity; but his persistent assertion of unpopular opinions, and stubborn fidelity to the denationalizing creed of the Manchester economists, have minimized his influence and circumscribed his authority in Canada.

The commercial unionists had a powerful organ in the Toronto *Mail*, and for a time the Toronto *Globe* gave active and influential support to the movement. A Commercial Union League was formed, with Mr. Goldwin Smith as president and Mr. G. Mercer Adam as secretary, and active steps were taken to organize branches and influence

opinion throughout the country, It was felt that the movement would gather its main strength in the agricultural communities, and the Farmers' Institutes were one of the first points of attack. At the annual meeting of the representatives of these Institutes at Toronto on April 28th, 1887, a manifesto was presented from Mr. Wiman and a resolution adopted declaring for the removal of trade restrictions between Canada and the United States either by reciprocity or commercial union; and asking in the event of failure to effect a satisfactory arrangement with the Republic, that Great Britain should be petitioned to impose differential duties in favour of colonial food products. The assent to an American Zollverein was rather more indefinite and guarded than the commercial unionists desired, but it gave standing ground to the advocates of the new movement, and a nucleus of achievement to the agitation. Many of the Institutes throughout the province passed similar resolutions, and the columns of *The Mail* and *The Globe* became crowded with interviews with representative farmers, merchants, and manufacturers, in definite advocacy of commercial union.

As early as March 1st, *The Mail* gave comfort and countenance to the agitation. Discussing the increasing tension between the two countries on the subject of the Atlantic fisheries, and the menace of retaliation from Washington, *The Mail* said: "A customs union is favoured as a basis of settle-

ment by Mr. Bayard, by leading men in Congress, and by the principal American journals without exception. That it would benefit Canada is a fact which no one that we know of . . . . has ever doubted. The only objection to it from this side of the line is that it might endanger British connection; but let us seriously ask ourselves if a people situated as we are in this controversy can afford to be swayed by sentiment." Two months later, in discussing the same question, *The Mail* said: "The Americans are willing to treat us fairly; and let us not forget that were we dealing with sixty millions of Frenchmen or Russians we should probably not be consulted at all on the subject. Should it be found necessary, in order to reach a settlement with the Americans, still further to alter our relations with the Mother Country—to demand the right, for instance, to let American goods in free, whilst maintaining our high duties against her—we must face the question like men. Having ceased to protect us, or rather having been relieved by our action of the duty of protecting us, England cannot very well object to our protecting ourselves by the only means within our reach."[1] Two months later still, *The Mail* accepted the new issue in blunt and uncompromising fashion. We read: "The movement in favour of reciprocity has originated, we firmly believe, as much in a patriotic desire to preserve the integrity of Confederation as from the more

[1] Toronto *Mail*, April 26th, 1887.

material consideration of dollars and cents. At any rate, reciprocity is the only available, if not the only conceivable remedy for the disease which has attacked the extremities of the country; and so soon as the people of Ontario reach the conclusion that it would also be a good thing for them, the advocates of commercial isolation may as well stand aside."[1]

On September 2nd, *The Mail* pronounced unequivocally for the adjustment of the Fisheries' dispute and the settlement of the future commercial relations of the United States and the British provinces on the basis of a Zollverein. "Reciprocity," *The Mail* now said, "is the only conceivable basis of settlement; but not the reciprocity of 1854, which gave us the American market for our natural products, while it excluded American manufactures from Canada. The reciprocity proffered this time will be commercial union; and we repeat that in a matter of such vital concern to the people of Canada, they should be permitted to speak their mind before the case is irrevocably closed. If there is anything in universal experience, the throwing down of the tariff wall between the two countries could not fail to benefit both. The opponents of the measure cannot point to a single instance where good has not resulted to adjoining countries from freeing commerce. All they can do is to conjure up *a priori* objections which have come to grief in

[1] Toronto *Mail*, June 29th, 1887.

every instance without exception where free intercourse has been substituted for customs barriers; and to tell us, they who are clapping prohibitory taxes on British staples without a qualm, that commercial union would be disloyal to the Mother Country. . . . In any event, the Canadian people should be allowed to express themselves upon the offer. It is no use continuing to boast of responsible government if our higher politics are to be regulated by a board over which we have no control."

The Globe was not less definite in its acceptance of commercial union, and quite as active in its advocacy of the new policy. It could claim no official authority to speak for the Liberal party, but it was recognized as the leading Liberal journal, and it was, perhaps, natural that the Conservative press should hold the party leaders responsible for its utterances. The truth is, however, that the Liberal Opposition in Parliament had not pronounced upon the question, and there was slight ground for the assumption that the project of commercial union would be accepted by a party caucus. Many of the influential counsellors of the party opposed commercial union from the first, and there was a rooted objection among Liberals as among Conservatives to any tariff system that would discriminate against British imports. *The Globe*, however, then considered that the advantages of a Zollverein would outweigh the objections to such an arrangement, and in the issue of April

27th, 1887, we find a clear and comprehensive statement of its position. "If," said *The Globe*, "commercial union between Canada and the United States is, as we believe, consistent with either the political connection of Canada and Great Britain, or the political independence of Canada, then there can be no sentimental argument against it. On the contrary, all sound sentiment is for it. A great service would be rendered to Great Britain by a trade arrangement that would remove all causes of dispute between Canada and the States. Who can argue that there would be any more offense to loyalty in trading across a line free of custom houses than across one adorned every few miles with these obstacles to business? Closer trade relations with the States could not occur without yielding new profits to Canadians, and to obtain larger profits under existing political institutions would tend to conserve them. The only temptation to annexation is that which arises from existing restraints upon reciprocal trade. Canada, if commercially united with the States and politically with Great Britain, would be a living link of friendship between the greater communities. Such a situation would be novel, but not at all impracticable. Its establishment would give permanent peace to North America, and be a long step to that loose confederation of all English-speaking communities which is the noblest project of the soundest sentimentalists of our race."

It is, no doubt, the fashion of history to ignore newspaper opinion, and possibly because the press is the most potent formative and creative force in modern civilization. It is necessary, however, in tracing the growth of this movement to profane the tradition, and to indicate the effective work performed by two powerful journals in fashioning public opinion for the acceptance of the policy of commercial union. It must be admitted also that they represented a considerable public feeling at the moment, even though we now know that the movement was always repugnant to the dominant commercial and political sentiment of the country. The Conservative press antagonized the programme of the commercial unionists from the outset. It was inimical to the interests of the protectionists, and in direct conflict with the fiscal and general policy of the Administration. It was argued that an American Zollverein would endanger British connection; that the abolition of the custom houses along the border would expose Canadian manufacturers to the overwhelming competition of the great specialized industries of the United States; that the proposal involved the acceptance of the American tariff, or at least of a tariff made at Washington; that the Canadian Parliament must become a mere machine for registering the fiscal decrees of Congress; and that a commercial union with the United States must lead inevitably to political union. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association adopted

resolutions declaring that "unrestricted reciprocity" in manufactured goods would be a serious blow at the commercial integrity of the Dominion; would result disastrously to our manufacturing and farming industries, and our financial and commercial interests; and that the Association was, therefore, unanimously opposed to any treaty with the United States which would admit American manufactures into Canada free of duty.[1] There could be only one result to such a controversy, and it is a tribute to the skill and ardour of the commercial unionists that it required a stiff fight to check the momentum and establish the real tendencies of their agitation.

Nowhere was the proposal more thoroughly examined and more keenly debated than before the Board of Trade of Toronto. Encouraged by the measure of success achieved at many Farmers' Institutes, Mr. Darling ventured to submit to the Board a resolution in favour of commercial union. He was then an influential factor in the commercial life of Toronto, and the Board of Trade in particular had profited greatly by his progressive and energetic direction of its affairs. There was no one from whom the Board would have received the proposal in a more sympathetic spirit, and altogether the circumstances were not unfavourable to a fair and candid discussion of the subject. Consideration of Mr. Darling's motion was begun at a meeting held on May 19th, and was renewed at

[1] Meeting at Toronto, May 4th, 1887.

subsequent special meetings of the Board. There was never any chance that commercial union would be accepted, and there was probably a feeling, stronger even than that which found expression, against any wide measure of reciprocity. But there seems to have been a disposition to reconcile conflicting opinions, and to reach a decision upon which all could unite. Whether by accident or design, it fell to the Hon. John Macdonald to assume the leadership of the forces opposed to commercial union. Mr. Macdonald had sat as a Liberal in the House of Commons, and was appointed to the Senate by Sir John Macdonald (the only Liberal, it may be stated by the way, whom the Conservative leader ever called to the Upper Chamber). He enjoyed in exceptional measure the confidence of the business community, and was influential alike with Liberals and Conservatives. After earnest and protracted debate, the Board accepted at his hands a resolution which said in substance that the Board was convinced that a commercial treaty, creditable and advantageous alike to both parties, could be framed in such a spirit of fairness as would afford the best guarantee for its perpetuity; but that, while in favour of all laudable means to serve an end so much desired, the Board must disapprove of any proposal to discriminate against Great Britain.

Many commercial unionists professed satisfaction with this resolution, while upon the other hand there was a feeling that in declaring for freer

commercial intercourse with the United States the Board should have expressed clear and positive disapproval of a Zollverein. It was true that Mr. Darling's resolution was not accepted; but it was also true that commercial union was not expressly condemned, and that Mr. Macdonald's amendment was interpreted as a practical endorsation of the movement in which Mr. Wiman, Mr. Goldwin Smith, and their allies in both countries were engaged. It was, therefore, determined to have the question reconsidered. For this purpose a meeting was called for mid-June, and again two nights were spent in eager, and sometimes acrimonious discussion of the various propositions submitted. The outcome was the adoption by unanimous vote of a second resolution by Mr. Macdonald to the effect that the largest possible freedom of commercial intercourse between Canada and the United States compatible with Canada's relations to Great Britain was desirable; but that the Board could not entertain any proposal which would place Great Britain at any disadvantage as compared with the United States, or which would tend in any measure, however small, to weaken the bonds which bind Canada to the Empire. The Board also accepted by a vote of 63 to 36 a motion by Mr. G. A. Chapman, which declared, that whilst the Board was desirous of reciprocal trade relations in natural products with the United States, it was opposed to commercial union, "believing that it cannot be

obtained without giving up the preservation of our autonomy as a separate nationality on this continent." The one resolution was not quite at peace with the other; but at least a pronouncement against commercial union was obtained, and that was the determined purpose of the supporters of Mr. Chapman's motion.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Macdonald's resolution was accepted by Mr. Darling and Mr. Goldwin Smith. Mr. Darling argued that under commercial union permanence in our commercial relations with the United States would be secured. We could have commercial union only with Britain's consent. On a limited scale this would be in consonance with the most cherished principles of Britain. A portion of the British Empire would then be in the enjoyment of free trade with the United States. Mr. Goldwin Smith also declared that he did not believe the Old Country would be in any danger of estrangement from Canada by the consummation of commercial union. If the case were but fairly put before England, he was confident she would see that such a reciprocity of trade as commercial union would effect, would not only not strain the relations between England and Canada, but would ultimately redound to the advantage of England. Many of Mr. Goldwin Smith's utterances revealed this tone of sympathy for the old land, and sometimes we seemed to see the Imperial pride of an Englishman wrestling hard with the cold philosophy

of his economic teaching. In one of his letters to *The Mail* in advocacy of commercial union, he said: "I am an Englishman and it would be difficult, I trust, to prove that I ever failed, when called upon, to show it. Were any measure really adverse to Great Britain proposed, if I could not conscientiously resist it I should stand aside. I am thoroughly convinced that free trade between Canada and the United States, even if it entails assimilation of tariffs, would not be adverse, but on the contrary, advantageous to Great Britain." He contended that the value of her six or seven hundred millions of investments in Canada would at once rise; that a new field for investment would be opened to British capitalists; and that even if the tariffs were assimilated, the joint scale would not be more adverse to Great Britain than the scale maintained by Canadian protectionists.[1]

He put his argument very clearly in his introduction to the Handbook of Commercial Union, which was circulated as the League's chief campaign document. He there says: "That commercial union must be followed by political connection is a suspicion which has been sedulously propagated and has found entrance into many minds. It is partly fostered, perhaps, by the name, which, however, was adopted, it is believed, with the special object of marking that the union was to be commercial only and not political. No one will contend in face

[1] "Commercial Union Handbook," page 229.

of familiar facts that two independent communities cannot make a commercial treaty without altering their political relations. In the present instance, no doubt, a necessity of an unusual character will be entailed by the combined action of the geographical relations and the present fiscal policy of both nations. The internal customs line being removed, if customs duties are still to be levied on the seaboard, it will be necessary to assimilate the tariffs, otherwise there will obviously be smuggling through one country into the other. But this is really no more subversive of our independence, or disparaging to our honour than other incidents of our geographical relation to the United States, such as our obligation to them for the use of their winter ports, and for the transmission of our goods in bond. . . . The Ottawa Parliament and Government would hardly be inclined to commit suicide because they had made an agreement with the Government at Washington respecting the rate of tariff. . . . It has been said that in Germany unification followed the Zollverein. The Zollverein, however, was at most a secondary cause. Germany, though politically decentralized, had been time out of mind a nation."[1]

This position was held by the commercial unionists throughout all the period during which reciprocal trade with the United States was the chief issue before the country. They maintained their separate

[1] Introduction to "Commercial Union Handbook," pages 30, 31.

organization, issued their own literature, and never quite coalesced with the Liberal party, or quite accepted unrestricted reciprocity as a satisfactory or practicable substitute for commercial union. On the eve of the general election of 1891, the Commercial Union Club of Toronto issued an address, in which they said: "Nor is our national honour threatened any more than our loyalty to Great Britain. Every nation in making a commercial treaty or agreement of any kind must resign to that extent, and for so long a time as the treaty lasts, its control over its own tariff. Great Britain herself does this when she makes a commercial treaty with France. Prussia did it when she entered into a Zollverein with the neighbouring states. Canada did it when she made with the United States the Reciprocal Treaty of 1854. But this implies no loss of commercial, much less of political, independence. Of political independence nothing can rob Canada but the vote of her people."[1]

It will be remembered that Sir William Howland was one of the commissioners sent to Washton by the Coalition Government to negotiate for better commercial intercourse between the two countries through concurrent legislation. He had long since retired from active public life, but his interest in the commercial relations of Canada and the neighbouring country had not abated. The views he had held a quarter of a century before he

[1] See Toronto *Globe* and *Mail*, February 14th, 1891.

still asserted with vigour and emphasis. In a statement made to an American journal, he said he was in favour of continental free trade, but not of such an arrangement as would require an assimilation of foreign tariffs. It was not reciprocity, he said, to touch the tariffs governing the trade of Canada and the United States with other countries. Let each country make its own tariff with other nations, but allow the fullest commercial intercourse with each other. It might be said, if the foreign tariffs of both countries were assimilated, that Canada had surrendered her political freedom, for it did not seem likely that the United States would lower her tariff to an equality with that of Canada; and for Canada to raise her tariff to the standard of the United States would almost debar England from trading with her. Under such an arrangement as he favoured, it would still be necessary to maintain the border custom houses in order to prevent the passage into either country, except in a legal way, of products bought in foreign countries. The excise laws of the two countries might be adjusted so that the products, the manufacture of which is governed by them, might freely pass the borders. He added: "In periods of national depression there was liable to be talk and even fear of annexation; but if commercial union gave prosperity to Canada, and he believed it would, her people would not bother about advocating annexation. The man with a full stomach and full pocket was seldom disloyal. That

feeling was the inheritance of the poor and hungry, who were anxious to better their condition."[1] This view recalls the notion, which even Sir John Macdonald did not altogether reject, that the statesmen of the South favoured the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 in order to allay discontent in Canada, and thus avert the annexation of new states imbued with the Northern sentiment against the system of black slavery.

Far more significant than the statement of Sir William Howland, who had ceased to be a political leader, or even than the position of Mr. Goldwin Smith, who had never become a political leader, was a speech made by Sir Richard Cartwright on October 12th, 1887, at Ingersoll. He was for the moment the most influential personality in the Liberal party, at least in the federal arena, and his words had an authority with the Liberals of Ontario which Mr. Laurier could not yet command. This speech was a stern arraignment of the Administration of Sir John Macdonald, a lucid, if gloomy, presentation of the financial and industrial condition of the country, and a direct acceptance of the policy of commercial union as the only effectual remedy for the economic and political evils which he deplored. He said in the course of his argument: "I am as averse as any man can be to annexation, or to resign our political independence, but I cannot shut my eyes to the facts. We have greatly

[1] New York *Sun*, May 31st, 1887.

misused our advantages. We have been most foolish and most wasteful in our expenditures. We have no means of satisfying the just demands of large portions of the Dominion except through such an arrangement as commercial union." "There is," he said, "a risk, and I cannot overlook it. But it is a choice of risks, and our present position is anything but one of stable equilibrium. Without Manitoba and the Maritime Provinces we cannot maintain ourselves as a Dominion. And looking to their present tempers and condition, and more especially to the financial results of Confederation in the Maritime Provinces, I say deliberately that the refusal or failure to secure free trade with the United States is much more likely to bring about just such a political crisis as these parties affect to dread than even the very closest commercial connection that can be conceived."

Thus Sir Richard Cartwright was the first of the active political leaders of the country to declare for commercial union, and naturally there was keen and even anxious interest to know how Mr. Laurier would deal with the movement which was crowding all other questions into the background. Mr. Blake told us in his celebrated letter to the Liberals of West Durham that he refused to make commercial union the policy of the Liberal party, but he seems to have been willing to settle the fisheries' dispute with the United States on the basis of extended commercial intercourse. In 1884, while

Mr. Blake was still leader of the Liberal party, and just after the Washington Government had given notice of the termination of the fishery clauses of the Washington Treaty, Mr. Davies, of Prince Edward Island, offered a motion in Parliament, which no doubt expressed the policy of the Opposition, and which declared that steps should be taken at an early day by the Government of Canada with the object of bringing about negotiations for a new treaty, providing for the citizens of Canada and the United States the reciprocal privileges of fishing and freedom from duties now enjoyed, together with additional reciprocal freedom in the trade relations of the two countries.[1] This position Mr. Laurier maintained when he became the leader of the Liberal party, and it is not clear that his attitude on commercial union was very different from that taken by Mr. Blake.

Mr. Laurier's first important public address after his election to the Liberal leadership was made at Somerset, Que., in August, 1887. He there indicated his distinct preference for a trade alliance between Great Britain and her colonies over a commercial union with the United States. He said: "We know that there is to-day in the United States a group of men determined upon giving us commercial union. We know that Mr. Butterworth, a member of the American Congress, has brought in a bill for that purpose. We know also that Mr.

[1] Hansard, 1884, page 1,182.

Wiman has lately visited Ontario to induce that province to adopt the idea of commercial union. We know that Detroit and other cities, as well as their trade organizations, have to a certain extent pronounced in favour of commercial union. If I am asked at present for my own opinion on the subject, I may say that for my part I am not ready to declare that commercial union is an acceptable idea. I am not ready for my part to say that commercial union should be adopted at the present moment. A great deal of study and reflection are needed to solve this question, for and against which there is much to be said. The commercial union idea may be realized, and it may also be surrounded by insurmountable difficulties. But I say this—and it is my actual policy—that the time has come to abandon the policy of retaliation followed thus far by the Canadian Government, to show the American people that we are brothers, and to hold out our hands to them, with a due regard for the duties we owe to our Mother Country. In certain quarters commercial union with Great Britain has been advocated, which obliges me to refer to that proposition. Commercial union with Great Britain has been suggested as an alternative to commercial union with the United States. As far as I am concerned, I will say of commercial union with Great Britain what I have said of commercial union with the United States. I do not believe that so far the question has been practically discussed. Certainly, if

it were reasonable, and all our interests were protected, I would accept a commercial treaty of that nature. It is permissible to suppose that this movement would be taken up by all the countries which at the present day recognize the supremacy of Great Britain. Some years ago, in 1883 or 1884, I think, Mr. Rouher, one of the most eminent public men of France, said, 'at present the world's equilibrium rests no longer, as in the past, on the Alps and the Pyrenees, but on the two hemispheres.' What was true at that time in politics is true to-day in trade. The commerce of the world, which was formerly limited to the nations of Europe, now takes in the entire globe. There is, therefore, room to suppose that all the nations recognizing the sovereignty of Great Britain would agree to rally together by means of commercial treaties. With this object in view delegates are now being sent to Australia. What would be easier than to open up a trade with Australia, than to have a commercial treaty with the Australian continent? I consider the idea as good and fair, and such being the case I believe that it will eventually triumph."[1]

Two months later Sir Richard Cartwright made his speech at Ingersoll, and there is undoubtedly a conflict in the tone and argument of the two deliverances. For the time the speech of Sir Richard Cartwright was perhaps regarded, at least in Ontario, as the more authoritative utterance, and there

[1]Speech at Somerset, Que., August 2nd, 1887.

was a general expectation that commercial union would be formally and definitely adopted as the trade policy of the Liberal party. But the necessity under commercial union for a common tariff and discrimination against Great Britain grew the more distasteful to a formidable element of the Liberal party the more the question was considered, and it became manifest that just so soon as the feeling of the party could find some official utterance, these features of the proposal would be explicitly rejected. The situation was greatly clarified by a correspondence which passed during the month of November between Mr. Edgar, M.P., and Mr. Wiman; and, if we do not mistake, it was in these letters of Mr. Edgar that the policy of unrestricted reciprocity was first definitely presented, and by these letters that the judgment of many Liberals was finally settled against the acceptance of commercial union. Mr. Edgar argued that a complete system of reciprocity of tariffs between Canada and the United States could be carried on without abolishing our custom houses, or tying our hands as to tariff legislation in any other respect. He pointed out that under the Elgin Treaty of 1854 we had a fair amount of free trade with the United States without adopting their customs duties. Our custom houses were not abolished on the frontier. Certain articles, the produce of both countries, were mutually admitted free of duty, and were entered and passed through the custom houses as free

goods. In 1874 the George Brown draft treaty, which was provisionally sanctioned by the American Government, proposed a much larger free list between the two countries, and embraced a number of manufactures. There was, however, in it no proposal to abolish custom houses nor to legislate for uniform tariffs.[1]

It was in this sense that the Interprovincial Conference which sat at Quebec in the autumn of 1887 agreed upon a declaration in favour of free trade with the United States. The conference included representatives of the Liberal Governments of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, of the coalition Government of New Brunswick, and of the Conservative Government of Manitoba, and they unanimously adopted the reciprocity resolution. It was as follows: "That having reference to the agitation on the subject of the trade relations between the Dominion and the United States, this Interprovincial Conference, consisting of representatives of all political parties, desires to record its opinion that unrestricted reciprocity would be of advantage to all the provinces of the Dominion; that this Conference and the people it represents cherish fervent loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, and warm attachment to British connection; and that this Conference is of opinion that a fair measure providing under proper conditions for unrestricted reciprocity in trade rela-

[1] Toronto *Globe*, November 15th, 22nd, and 29th, 1887.

tions between the Dominion and the United States would not lessen these sentiments on the part of our people, but on the contrary may even serve to increase them, and would at the same time, in connection with the adjustment of the fishery dispute, tend to happily settle grave difficulties which have from time to time arisen between the Mother Country and the United States."[1]

In December of this year it became necessary to elect a member of the Commons for East Northumberland. Dr. Mallory ran as the joint candidate of the Liberals and Commercial Unionists. Mr. Goldwin Smith took the stump in his behalf, and hardly any other issue was raised in the contest. Dr. Mallory was beaten, but only by a very small majority, and the contest gave no indication of deep popular feeling against the policy which he had deliberately elected to champion.[2] In the meantime, Mr. Wiman had spoken at many meetings throughout Ontario and at chief points in some of the other provinces in support of commercial union, while an equally vigorous assault upon the movement was maintained by Col. Geo. T. Denison, Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, M.P., Principal Grant, and other leaders of the Imperial Federation League in Canada. The speakers of the League, and they spoke with marked effect, argued for

[1] Toronto *Globe*, November 10th, 1887.

[2] The total vote for Cochrane (Conservative) was 2,148, for Mallory (Commercial Unionist) 2,124; majority for Cochrane 24.

preferential fiscal arrangements between the several parts of the Empire, and vehemently protested against consideration of any trade policy which would discriminate against the Mother Country or any part of the Empire in favour of a foreign power.

As the year was going out the Hon. J. W. Longley, of Halifax, Senator Macdonald, of Toronto, and Mr. J. X. Perrault, of Montreal, spoke at Boston. Mr. Longley made an eloquent argument for free trade with the Republic. Mr. Macdonald insisted that the two countries should adopt the largest possible commercial reciprocity compatible with existing rights and with national obligations, but that it was not right to sweep away by legislative action industries which had been fostered and called into life by legislative action. Mr. Perrault demanded unrestricted commercial relations between Canada and the States. No progress was made with Mr. Butterworth's bill in Congress, and the proposition was not entertained, if considered at all, by the negotiators of the Fisheries Treaty. In fact, Mr. Chamberlain had said at Belfast, while on his way to Washington, "Canada knows perfectly well that commercial union with the United States means political separation from Great Britain." He came on to Toronto from Washington, and accepted a dinner from the Board of Trade. The speeches turned mainly upon continental and Imperial relationships, and Mr. Chamberlain was hardly less

frank than at Belfast. He said: "I am in favour of the widest possible commercial union and intercourse, not only with the United States, but with all the world. That is the true unrestricted reciprocity. There is, however, a restricted reciprocity which would make you dependent for your financial freedom upon the Government of another state, and perhaps pave the way for the surrender of something which is still more important, I mean your political independence."

Thus the controversy stood when Parliament assembled for the session of 1888, and the Liberal members came together in caucus in order to define the policy of the party on the subject which for many months had engrossed the attention of the country. It is not disputed that there were commercial unionists among the Liberal members of the Commons, and, in fact, some of these were so resolutely set upon the advocacy of the project that they refused to accept the decision of caucus, and tabled motions in favour of a Zollverein as preferable to any less limited measure of reciprocity. The overwhelming judgment of caucus, however, was against commercial union, and against any proposition which involved a common tariff and fiscal dependence upon Washington. But it is still true that the resolution which Sir Richard Cartwright was authorized to introduce did imply discrimination against Great Britain, and this the mover undertook to justify by showing that the existing Canadian

tariff was pretty nearly as hostile to British manufacturers as that of the United States; that if conditions remained unchanged the Canadian tariff must become the more onerous of the two; that under unrestricted reciprocity we should become richer, and therefore buy more largely from Great Britain, although there would be an alteration in the character of our imports; that England was essentially just and would concede the right of Canada to make any legitimate bargain that would serve the interests of her people; and that it was for Canadians to decide whether they should continue to be a hostage to the United States for the good behaviour of England, or rise equal to the situation and become a link of union and concord between the two great English races. The resolution which Sir Richard Cartwright introduced on March 14th, 1888, read as follows: "That it is highly desirable that the largest possible freedom of commercial intercourse should obtain between the Dominion of Canada and the United States, and that it is expedient that all articles manufactured in or the natural products of either of the said countries, should be admitted free of duty into the ports of the other, articles subject to duties of excise or of internal revenue alone excepted; that it is further expedient that the Government of the Dominion should take steps at an early date to ascertain on what terms and conditions arrangements can be effected with the United States

for the purpose of securing full and unrestricted reciprocity of trade therewith."

It is doubtful if this resolution did not go beyond the general feeling and purpose of the Liberal party. It seemed, however, to the leaders that in order to make an issue with the Government on the question, it was necessary to adopt a positive policy, and to go further than the protectionists would allow Sir John Macdonald to travel. They were also persuaded that the condition of the country required an heroic remedy, and that no proposal for limited reciprocity would be considered at Washington. They considered, further, that under continental free trade the chief manufactures of Canada would experience such expansion, and the producing classes reap such signal benefits, that solid and abiding political contentment under British connection would go hand in hand with closer commercial connection with the great English-speaking nation of the new continent. But, of course, the Conservative party had an undoubted right to attack the resolution upon its face, and hold the Liberals to the literal language of their platform. The policy was essentially weak at two points: (1) It was exceedingly difficult to show that absolute reciprocity could be arranged short of a common tariff; and (2) the Liberal party had no power, failing concurrent action at Washington, to put their policy into effect. The obvious answer to the first objection that if it were found necessary to adopt a common

tariff a less measure of reciprocity must be accepted, could not be made without leaving the platform open to adoption by Sir John Macdonald whenever he found it necessary or expedient to go to the country. Then, as to the second objection, politicians out of office could not conduct negotiations at Washington and, therefore, any definite arrangement could neither be sought nor obtained. The policy of unrestricted reciprocity was now, however, irrevocably adopted, and for the next three years all the energies of the Liberal press and the Liberal leaders were devoted to educating the country to acceptance of the proposition. Mr. Laurier and Sir Richard Cartwright were particularly active, and there is no doubt their arguments told powerfully upon the people from one end of the Dominion to the other.

OF ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE.

CHAPTER XXII

THE RECIPROCITY CAMPAIGN

TOWARDS the close of 1890 there were rumours of a premature dissolution of Parliament; but in view of the character of the campaign which the Conservative party had waged against the Liberal trade policy, no one was prepared for a ministerial change of front upon that question. That, however, is exactly what was contemplated. On January 16th, 1891, *The Empire*, then the chief organ of the Conservative party, published a despatch from its Ottawa correspondent, in which it was said: "It is learned from the very best sources that the Canadian Government has recently been approached by the United States Government with a view to the development of trade relations between the two countries, and that our Government has requested the advice of Her Majesty's Government on the subject."[1] Shortly after the appearance of this despatch Sir John Macdonald visited Toronto, and in a speech at the Albany Club said: "While we are going to stand by our National Policy, it is the fact that every

[1] "The answer made by Mr. Blaine, the Secretary of the United States, on behalf of his Government, was an overture to reciprocity."—Sir John Thompson at a public meeting in Toronto, February 6th, 1891.

measure of reciprocal trade we have got from our neighbours has been got by the Conservatives. The Treaty of 1854 was got by a Conservative Government; the Treaty of Washington, in 1870, was negotiated by himself as Canadian commissioner; and when the Treaty of 1888 was made, Sir Charles Tupper, who had long been a colleague, was specially appointed a commissioner. So that every treaty extending trade with our neighbours had been got by Conservatives, and by Governments of which he was a member. He believed there was room for extending our trade on a fair basis, and that there were things in which we could enlarge our bounds without in any way infringing on the National Policy."[1]

On February 3rd the dissolution of Parliament was announced, and simultaneously with the announcement, *The Empire* detailed at length the steps taken by the Government for the initiation of reciprocity negotiations at Washington. The Ottawa correspondent of *The Empire* wrote that: "In view of the importance of the reasons which have induced the Government to appeal to the country at the present moment, *The Empire* is privileged to publish a copy of the despatch from His Excellency the Governor-General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, showing the nature of the Government's proposals to the United States, and indicating the earnest desire of the Adminis-

[1] Toronto *Empire*, January 28th, 1891.

tration for the development of trade between the United States and Canada." The correspondent went on to explain that several weeks previous to the date of writing, when negotiations were in progress between Newfoundland and the United States looking to a reciprocity treaty, the Canadian Government made representations that Canada should have the option of being included in any arrangements with that colony as to the fisheries or trade. This contention was based on solemn assurances given by the Newfoundland Government two or three years before, and repeated on successive occasions, that if special privileges were allowed to any country in regard to the purchase of supplies or bait in Newfoundland, such privileges would also be granted to Canada. The Secretary of State for the United States, when he learned of the position of affairs, insisted that the negotiations should be carried on separately. He intimated, however, that he would not be unwilling to enter into negotiations with Canada, but preferred that they should be private and unofficial. The Dominion Government thereupon asked the Imperial authorities to remind Mr. Blaine that Canada had always been ready for a fair reciprocal arrangement, and had made repeated offers to that effect, which, however, had been ignored or refused by the United States. It was further represented that the Dominion Government was willing, now that overtures had been made to them, again to negotiate,

and that they would prefer that these negotiations should be official and under a commission from the British Government. Mr. Blaine thereupon asked upon what basis the Dominion Government proposed to negotiate, and in response the Canadian Ministers caused to be sent to Lord Knutsford, for transmission to Washington, a despatch stating the subjects which Canada desired to have considered by a joint commission. The subjects covered by the despatch to Lord Knutsford were:

1. Renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, with the modifications required by the altered circumstances of both countries, and with the extensions deemed by the commission to be in the interests of Canada and the United States.

2. Reconsideration of the Treaty of 1888 with respect to the Atlantic fisheries, with the aim of securing the free admission into the United States markets of Canadian fishery products, in return for facilities to be granted to United States fishermen to buy bait and supplies, and to tranship cargoes in Canada, all such privileges to be mutual.

3. Protection of mackerel and other fisheries on the Atlantic Ocean and in inland waters.

4. Relaxation of the seaboard coasting laws of the two countries.

5. Relaxation of the coasting laws of the two countries on the inland waters dividing Canada from the United States.

6. Mutual salvage and saving of wrecked vessels.

7. Arrangements for settling the boundary between Canada and Alaska.

In a leading article in the same issue, *The Empire* thus dealt with the proposals and the position of the Administration: "We are convinced that the utmost satisfaction will be felt by the people of Canada at the completeness of our Government's proposals, and at the evident proof of their desire to settle the principal questions at issue between the two countries on a basis honourable to both, and to extend international trade so far as it can be extended to the mutual advantage, and without sacrificing the interests of either nation. The position of the Government of Canada we take to be this, that in any measure of reciprocity we must consider the changed conditions that have grown up since the abrogation of the Treaty of 1854, and that Canada, while ready and anxious to extend trade in mutually beneficial lines, must stand firmly by her national industries and carefully conserve her industrial system. There is no reason why a fair and honourable reciprocity, advantageous to both Canada and the United States, should not be the issue of such a discussion as is proposed. We believe that the people of Canada will endorse our Government in the policy it has been pursuing, and will strengthen its hands in the attempt to secure a fair treaty, without that absolute surrender of our commercial system which is necessarily involved in the Opposition policy, with its declared intention of

reducing Canada to a state of vassalage in subjection to the United States, of discriminating against the trade of the Empire, and forcing us into direct taxation."[1]

It is clear that the relative positions of the political parties in Canada were materially altered by the announcement that the Government had actually entered into negotiations with Washington for extended commercial intercourse and the amicable settlement of all questions at issue between the two countries. It was particularly gratifying to Canada that the negotiations should have begun at the instance of the Washington authorities, and it was a fair assumption that no overtures would have been made if the American Administration were not ready to concede a generous measure of reciprocity. It could reasonably be argued that as the Americans had deliberately opened negotiations with Sir John Macdonald and his Ministers, and as these Ministers desired only the sanction of the country to conclude a treaty, it would be rash and untimely to disturb the negotiations by a change of Government in Canada, and bring in a Liberal Administration which would perhaps make unnecessary concessions to the United States. There seemed to be hope, according to the inspired despatches from Ottawa, that a renewal of the Treaty of 1854 would be accepted at Washington. At least it was possible to quiet the protected manufacturers

[1] Editorial in the Toronto *Empire*, February 4th, 1891.

with the assurance that only reciprocity in natural products would be sanctioned, while for the farmers there was the promise of "modifications required by the altered circumstances of both countries, and the extensions deemed by the commission to be in the interests of Canada and the United States." In short, the Government seemed to be asking authority to negotiate for either restricted or unrestricted reciprocity, and in face of the country, on the eve of an election, the Opposition stood naked and bereft of the one issue upon which they had elected to challenge the Administration.

Naturally there was blank consternation in the ranks of the Liberal party, and profound suspicion of the good faith of the Conservative leaders. The truth seems to be that the Government had constructed an electioneering sham, and had resorted even to misrepresentation in order to baffle and checkmate the leaders of the Opposition, and snatch a favourable verdict from the country. There was amazement in Washington as well as in Canada over the attitude of the Canadian Government, and the representations made on its behalf to the Canadian electors. Congressman Baker, of the Rochester district, in the State of New York, addressed Mr. Blaine on the subject. He pointed out in his letter to the Secretary of State that it was reported in the newspapers of Canada and along the northern border of his State, where his constituents were deeply interested in the subject, that negotiations

were going on between the United States and Great Britain with a view to partial reciprocity with Canada, covering natural products only and not manufactures; and it was stated that Sir Charles Tupper was on his way to Washington as a commissioner to negotiate for such modification of the American tariff. In reply, Mr. Blaine said: "I authorize you to contradict the rumours you refer to. There are no negotiations whatever on foot for a reciprocity treaty with Canada, and you may be assured no such scheme for reciprocity with the Dominion confined to natural products will be entertained by this Government. We know nothing of Sir Charles Tupper's coming to Washington."

It may be as well to say now that this statement by Mr. Blaine was strictly accurate, in so far as concerned the origin of the negotiations, and that Sir Charles Tupper afterwards confessed over his own signature that any statement that the invitation to negotiate had come from Washington was untrue.[1] He was less candid when he declared that

[1] "In view of the fact that you had come to the State Department with the proposals, and that the subject was then for the first time mentioned between us—and in view of the further fact that I agreed to a private conference, as explained in my minute, I confess it was a surprise to me when several weeks later, during the Canadian canvas, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper both stated before public assemblages that an informal discussion of a reciprocity treaty would take place at Washington after the 4th of March, by the initiation of the Secretary of State. . . . I deem it important, since the matter has been for some weeks open to public remark, to have it settled that the conference was not 'initiated' by me, but on the contrary that the

absolutely no negotiations were afoot. There was at least the arrangement for negotiations, and if all the truth were known it would probably be found that Canada was forced to intervene in order to prevent the conclusion of a treaty between Newfoundland and the United States, which gravely threatened the fishing interests of Canada, and which, when finally drafted, the Imperial Government—as in the case of Prince Edward Island many years before—refused to sanction, as inimical to the general interests of the British American communities. Mr. Blaine's letter greatly exasperated the Conservative press and the Conservative politicians in Canada, and he was viciously caricatured and violently lampooned throughout the election contest. It was vain, in face of his letter, to maintain the pretence of negotiations for reciprocity in natural products only, and the Government was forced to make its appeal to the protected interests, to the sentiment of attachment to British institutions, and to such prejudice against the United States as lurked in the hearts of Canadians. "The old flag, the old

private arrangement of which I spoke was but a modification of your proposal, and in no sense an original suggestion from the Government of the United States."—Letter of the Hon. J. G. Blaine, Secretary of State of the United States, to Sir Julian Pauncefote, British Minister at Washington, April 1st, 1891.

"I told Mr. Blaine that I wished in the outset to recognize the accuracy of the statement contained in his letter to Sir Julian Pauncefote, which I had seen, in reference to the initiation of the negotiations regarding reciprocal trade arrangements between the two countries."—Letter of Sir Charles Tupper to Sir John Macdonald, April 21st, 1891.

man, and the old policy" was the battle cry of the party, and it no doubt appealed with peculiar force to the sentiments, the prejudices, and the interests of powerful elements of the Canadian people.[1] It was a campaign of shrieking, of denunciation, and of violence; and no doubt very many of the electorate were thoroughly persuaded that the fate of British connection depended upon the result of the contest. There were intemperate utterances by Liberals as well as by Conservatives, and in too much of the Opposition literature that deep note of pessimism and tone of contempt for sentimental considerations which are always offensive to the national pride and the sturdy self-reliance of Anglo-Saxon peoples.

Sir John Macdonald's address to the country is a thoroughly characteristic specimen of his electioneering methods. It gives countenance to the baser charges and the meaner suspicions against his opponents. It is a crafty appeal to prejudice, rather than a solid argument addressed to the sober judgment of the people upon real issues of public policy. The concluding sentences sufficiently attest its character. "As for myself," said Sir John Macdonald, "my course is clear. A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die. With my

[1] The campaign motto, "The old man, the old flag, and the old policy," was the coinage of the late L. P. Kribs, who was news editor of the Toronto *Empire* during all the time that it was published, and whose political writing in various Canadian papers during a score of years attracted wide and favourable attention.

utmost effort, with my latest breath will I oppose the 'veiled treason' which attempts by sordid means and mercenary proffers to lure our people from their allegiance. During my long public service of nearly half a century, I have been true to my country and its best interests, and I appeal with equal confidence to the men who have trusted me in the past, and to the young hope of the country, with whom rest its destinies for the future, to give me their united and strenuous aid in this my last effort for the unity of the Empire, and the preservation of our commercial and political freedom." Strained and exaggerated as this language now seems, there was the skill of the master in the appeal, and it touched the very springs of the affection and veneration for Sir John Macdonald which lay deep in the hearts of the Canadian people.

Mr. Laurier a few days later sent out from Quebec an address to the people in reply to the Conservative leader, remarkable for its prudence and courage, its clear and straightforward definition of the Liberal policy, and its calmness and restraint in the face of exceptional provocation. The Liberal leader said: "We have been led to suppose by the Ministerial press that the dissolution was taking place with the view of consulting the Canadian people upon the advisability of sending commissioners to Washington for the purpose of attempting to negotiate a treaty for the reciprocal exchange of natural products between the two countries. Indeed

we have been informed that overtures in that respect had been made to the Imperial Government, yet, strange to say, of this not a word is to be found in the manifesto of the Prime Minister.

"The reform suggested [by the Liberal party] is absolute reciprocal freedom of trade between Canada and the United States. The advantages of this policy we place upon this one consideration that the producing power of the community is vastly in excess of its consuming power; that, as a consequence new markets have to be found abroad, and that our geographical position makes the great neighbouring nation of 63,000,000 people of kindred origin our best market. Indeed the advantages of this policy are so various that they are not denied, nor the statement of the same contradicted; but three objections are urged against it. It is asserted: (*a*) That this policy would discriminate against England; (*b*) that it would make direct taxation unavoidable; and (*c*) that it is 'veiled treason' and would lead to annexation.

"The charge that unrestricted reciprocity would involve discrimination against England cannot have much weight in the mouths of men whose policy was protection, whose object was to do away with the importation of English manufactured goods, whose object was to destroy British trade to that extent. It is well, however, to meet this charge squarely and earnestly. It cannot be expected, it were folly to expect, that the interests of a colony

must always be identical with the interests of the mother land. The day must come when from no other cause than the development of national life in the colony there must be a clashing of interests with the mother land, and in any such case, much as I would regret the necessity, I would stand by my native land. Moreover, the assertion that unrestricted reciprocity means discrimination against England, involves the proposition that the Canadian tariff would have to be assimilated to the American tariff. I deny the proposition. Reciprocity can be obtained upon an assimilation of tariffs, or upon the retention of its own tariff by each country. Reciprocity is a matter of agreement to be obtained only by mutual concessions between the two countries. Should the concessions demanded from the people of Canada involve consequences injurious to their sense of duty either to themselves or the mother land, the people of Canada would not have reciprocity at such a price; but to reject the idea of reciprocity in advance before a treaty has been made on account of consequences which can spring only from the existence of a treaty, is manifestly as illogical as it is unfair. . . . .

"The charge that unrestricted reciprocity is 'veiled treason' is a direct and unworthy appeal to passion and prejudice. It is an unworthy appeal even when presented with the great authority of Sir John Macdonald's name. As to the consequent charge that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to

annexation, if it means anything it means that unrestricted reciprocity would make the people so prosperous that, not satisfied with a commercial alliance, they would forthwith vote for political absorption in the American Republic. If this be not the true meaning implied in the charge, I leave it to every man's judgment that it is unintelligible on any other ground."

This address gave fresh courage and confidence to Liberals throughout the country, and dispelled the fears of many that the Liberal leaders had some secret understanding with Washington, and were bent upon a quarrel with Great Britain, if that should become necessary to the establishment of unrestricted reciprocity, But the stock of Conservative ammunition was not exhausted. For some weeks they had been preparing for the decisive stroke of the contest, and it was finally delivered under circumstances which made it peculiarly sensational and impressive. In July, 1890, Mr. Edward Farrer, who had served for some years as chief editorial writer on *The Mail*, accepted a similar position on *The Globe* newspaper. Mr. Farrer had earned a wide reputation by his forceful handling of several great controversies. His work had strength, dignity, and finish. He had a remarkable persistence in attack, and a capacity for economic argument such as few other writers in Canadian journalism have possessed. The first hint of some projected exposure was dropped by Sir John Thompson in

the course of a speech at Halifax. He intimated that the country would shortly be furnished with conclusive proof of the treasonable relations of one of the leaders of the Liberal party with politicians at Washington. Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper were announced to speak at Toronto on February 17th, and it was whispered in advance that startling revelations were impending. It was the veteran Conservative leader himself who undertook to lead the attack upon Mr. Farrer, and to hold the Liberal party responsible for his proceedings. Mr. Farrer had written a pamphlet dealing with the Atlantic fisheries, the disposition of the fishermen towards the United States, and the methods adopted by Sir John Macdonald to reconcile the Eastern Provinces to exclusion from the American market. The *brochure* hinted at the imposition by the United States of a tonnage tax on Nova Scotia vessels laden whole or in part with fish as a means of stopping seizures of American vessels; at the suspension of the bonding privilege; at cutting the connection of the Canadian Pacific Railway with United States territory at Sault Ste. Marie; at measures to oblige Great Britain to withdraw her countenance and support from the Canadian contention as she did in 1871; and declared that Sir John Macdonald's disappearance from the stage would be the signal for a movement in Canada towards annexation.

Proof sheets of this pamphlet were stolen from a

Toronto printing office and put into the hands of Sir John Macdonald, and it was not unnatural that the Conservative politicians should seek to connect the Liberal party with its preparation and publication. Sir John Macdonald gave the most damaging interpretation to the document, and professed to find in its pages conclusive evidence of the determination of the Liberal leaders to hand Canada over to the United States. Mr. Farrer, however, in a signed letter in *The Globe* of the next morning frankly and courageously assumed responsibility for the pamphlet, and explained that it was written for an American friend, that only twelve copies were printed, that one had gone to the United States and one to Great Britain, and the remaining copies were still in his possession. He said that he had undertaken to prepare the statement before he had any connection with *The Globe*, good, bad, or indifferent. "But," said Mr. Farrer, "the accident that I was on another journal does not affect the case at all. I should do the same thing if I saw fit to-morrow, without reference to *The Globe*, just as I did it without reference to *The Mail;* for surely a writer on a newspaper, conducted—as all Canadian papers are—on the impersonal system, is entitled to his private opinions and his personal liberty of action." He adhered to his opinion that political union with the United States was the manifest destiny of Canada, and that Sir John Macdonald's methods of Government would not

outlast him; and he concluded: "I deny the assumption that *The Globe* or the Liberal party is bound or affected by anything written, said, or done by a mere writer for *The Globe* in his private hours or private capacity. It would be a monstrous thing for Mr. Laurier to apply that code to any of the writers on *The Empire*, or for Mr. Gladstone, let us say, to employ it against somebody connected with *The Standard*. A newspaper is to be judged by its printed utterances, and is no more responsible for the acts or opinions of its staff outside of its columns than for what they choose to have for dinner. Any other understanding would render the pursuit of journalism extremely difficult, if not impossible, both for employers and employed."

This was a reasonable statement, as truthful as it was frank, but the Conservative papers held to Mr. Farrer's pamphlet as one of the great issues of the contest, and the shouts of treason grew ever louder, the appeal to passion and prejudice more vehement, the charges of plotting and conspiracy more shrill and insistent. Later in the campaign private letters from Mr. Farrer and Congressman Hitt, of Illinois, were read by Sir Charles Tupper at a public meeting at Windsor; but neither these letters nor the pamphlet involved the Liberal leaders, or furnished evidence of any organized movement to separate Canada from Great Britain, and throw the country into the arms of the United States. If Mr. Farrer was a political unionist, he

had distinguished prototypes in the ranks of the Conservative party of other days, some of whom lived to do great and eminent service for Canada, and to receive even the recognition of the British sovereign. Ostracism for opinion's sake can never be very successful in a British country.

The significance of Mr. Farrer's pamphlet was greatly exaggerated, and the deductions drawn from its discovery were wholly unwarranted. There was no plot. There was no conspiracy. There was no intrigue with Washington. There was not even the shadow of an understanding with Mr. Blaine, or any other American statesman, that in case of success in the elections the trade policy of the Liberal party would be accepted by the Washington Administration. The Liberal leaders, in fact, had expressly rejected the policy of commercial union, and stood only for such a measure of free trade with the United States as would be sanctioned by the Home Government. The utterances of Mr. Laurier, of Mr. Mowat, of Mr. Mackenzie, of the mass of Liberal politicians and journals, could not be misunderstood. There were, no doubt, political unionists among Liberals, as among Conservatives, but the overwhelming sentiment of the Liberal party was uncompromisingly British, and no considerations of material advantage could overcome their attachment to British institutions, or uproot their devotion to throne and Empire.

Mr. Mackenzie, now a broken and pathetic figure,

passing swiftly towards the end, was renominated by the Liberals of East York, and in his only address to his constituents, and, in fact, his last public utterance, he said: "It has been said by some of the ministerial papers that Great Britain would not consent to any extension of a free trade policy. I can only say that in the negotiations of 1874 at Washington, conducted by Mr. George Brown, the Government was in active communication with the Colonial Office, and a list of the articles proposed to be embodied in the new treaty was transmitted for consideration to Downing Street. The general spirit which pervaded these communications was simply that Canada and Canadians knew best what suited themselves. No doubt they were also aware of the fact that anything which benefited Canadian trade would more or less be grateful to the statesmen of the Mother Country. I could never consent to the Zollverein policy for obvious reasons, but I cannot conceive why anyone should object to reciprocal free trade secured by treaty and not inimical to the interests of Great Britain as the heart of the Empire."[1]

While the hue and cry against Mr. Farrer was at its height Mr. Mowat spoke in Toronto, and he unquestionably voiced the deep-seated sentiment of the Liberal party. "There is," he said "but a fragment of our people, either Conservatives or Reformers, who do not love British connection. There

[1] Toronto *Globe*, January 9th, 1891.

is but a fragment of our people who take any other view, and there are as many of that fragment on the Conservative side as on the Reform side. For myself I am a true Briton. I love the old land very dearly. I am glad I was born a British subject. A British subject I have lived for three-score years, and something more—I hope to live my life a British subject and as a British subject die. I trust and I hope that my children and my grandchildren, who have also been born British subjects, will live their lives as British subjects and as British subjects die. As loving my country in this way I rejoice that there is so much loyalty amongst the people. I rejoice at it even though sometimes it is perverted by those who have some base object to serve by the perversion of it. Do not let any one make you suppose that loyalty requires any measure which is opposed to the national interests of the country, British connection has never done us any harm; British connection has never stood in the way of the industry of this country; British connection has been an advantage to us, and I believe will always continue to be an advantage to us. You are my fellow-Britons; you are my fellow-loyalists; let us take care that in this matter we are not deceived by those who have an object in deceiving us. Let us all take care that we shall not be drawn into the absurdity of considering that reciprocity to a certain extent may be a good thing, may be for our advantage, may confirm the loyalty of our people,

may put down all thought of annexation, but that if that is extended a little further, it brings on annexation, brings on anti-British feeling amongst us. I utterly repudiate that. The sentiment of the country is far stronger than our opponents pretend, and than a few of our own friends have been led to believe. Our opponents are afraid of being Yankeefied if they get unrestricted reciprocity. We are not afraid of being Yankeefied by any such thing. I am quite sure that the Reformers will not be Yankeefied by unrestricted reciprocity, and I hope the Conservatives will not be Yankeefied either by any such means."[1]

This was the tone of the Liberal press and the Liberal speakers all over the country, and nothing could be wider of the mark than to treat the election of 1891 as a contest between British connection and continentalism. Polling took place on March 5th, and the result, under all the circumstances, was remarkable. Mr. Laurier had often said that the Liberal party could not obtain office while Sir John Macdonald lived. There could be hardly any doubt that the old Conservative leader was engaged in his last fight, and that he commanded the passionate devotion of his party. He had likewise the very general support of the bankers, traders, and manufacturers of the country, and the sympathetic regard of that great independent element which distrusts new men and new proposals,

[1] Toronto *Globe*, February 19th, 1891.

and silently determines the issue of so many contests. He had the advantage also of the strenuous efforts made by his press and his campaigners to put the Liberal leaders under suspicion of intrigue with Washington, and to raise against them the British sentiment of the country. He was further aided by the fear, the natural fear, of many traders and manufacturers that the summary establishment of free trade with the United States would confuse their business connections, swamp their trade, and destroy their industries. Against all these disadvantages, however, the Liberal party broke even in Ontario and Quebec, while the adverse vote of the other provinces gave a total majority of less than thirty to the Administration. It is well, however, to say again that it was not a contest between British connection and continentalism, and that no appreciable percentage of the electors who voted for Liberal candidates, were animated by separatist motives, or less zealous than Sir John Macdonald for "the unity of the empire and the preservation of our commercial and political freedom."

There has still to be recorded one remarkable incident of this remarkable contest. Simultaneously with the returns of the polling, appeared a striking and disturbing letter from the Hon. Edward Blake. Throughout the contest Mr. Blake was silent, and from time to time it was hinted by Conservative papers and by speakers from Conservative platforms that he was at variance with Mr. Laurier and Sir

Richard Cartwright, and hostile to the trade policy of the party. He had not accepted renomination in West Durham, and a letter which was said to have been read behind closed doors at the Liberal Convention at Bowmanville was withheld from the public. All the mystery and uncertainty which surrounded his attitude was dispelled by the communication which now appeared over his familiar signature. It is necessary to deal somewhat exhaustively with this statement. Mr. Blake said that in our then existing political condition a moderate revenue tariff approximating to free trade with all the world, and coupled with liberal provisions for reciprocal free trade with the States, would be, if practicable, our best arrangement. It seemed, however, to be the settled policy of the States to decline a limited reciprocity. What was best was therefore not now attainable. The Conservative policy he declared, had failed to accomplish the predictions of its promoters, and he uttered a sweeping condemnation of its tendencies and results.

"Its real tendency has been, as foretold twelve years ago, towards disintegration and annexation, instead of consolidation and the maintenance of that British connection of which they claim to be the special guardians. It has left us with a small population, a scanty immigration, and a North-West empty still; with enormous additions to our public debt and yearly charge, an extravagant system of expenditure, and an unjust and oppressive

tariff; with restricted markets for our needs, whether to buy or to sell, and all the host of evils (greatly intensified by our special conditions) thence arising; with trade diverted from its natural into forced, and, therefore, less profitable channels, and with unfriendly relations and frowning tariff walls, ever more and more estranging us from the mighty English-speaking nation to the south—our neighbours and relations—with whom we ought to be, as it was promised that we should be, living in generous amity and liberal intercourse. Worse; far worse! It has left us with lowered standards of public virtue and a death-like apathy in public opinion; with racial, religious, and provincial animosities rather inflamed than soothed; with a subservient Parliament, an autocratic Executive, debauched constituencies, and corrupted and corrupting classes; with lessened self-reliance and increased dependence on the public chest and on legislative aids, and possessed withal by a boastful jingo spirit far enough removed from true manliness, loudly proclaiming unreal conditions and exaggerated sentiments, while actual facts and genuine opinions are suppressed. It has left us with our hands tied, our future compromised, and in such a plight that, whether we stand or move, we must run some risks which else we might have either declined or encountered with greater promise of success."

He contended that fair traders and federationists,

Tories and protectionists to the contrary notwithstanding, there was no reasonable prospect that the people of the United Kingdom would seriously engage in a struggle to which their whole Liberal party was opposed, and which their Conservative Prime Minister had likened to a civil war — a struggle to turn back for forty years the clock of time, and to achieve a social, industrial, and economic revolution, in order to reimpose protective duties which would effectively restrict, in favour of their own landlords, and of colonial producers like ourselves, the supply of their staple foods. Indeed, he said, it seemed difficult to conceive a suggestion which, coming from Canada, would be more calculated than this to alienate British feeling; even though accompanied by the sop of a delusive differential duty in favour of British manufactures. Under these circumstances, unrestricted free trade with the States, secured for a long term of years, would, even though accompanied by higher duties against the rest of the world than he for one admired, give us in practice the great blessing of a measure of free trade, much larger than we then enjoyed or could otherwise attain. This would greatly advance our most material interests, and help our natural, our largest, most substantial and most promising industries; it would create an influx of population and capital, and promote a rapid development of forces and materials now almost unused; in three words, it would give us men,

money, and markets. Obviously, however, any practicable plan involved differential duties against the United Kingdom and the rest of the world. Even with such duties, the gaps in our revenue, due to the loss of taxes on imports from the States and on imports from Britain to be replaced by home and United States manufactures, would be very great, incapable of being filled by a tea and coffee tax, a bill tax, and other available taxes of like nature, and by practicable economies. Direct taxation, even in its most promising form, a succession tax, was out of the question, and therefore of the financial problem presented by unrestricted reciprocity, he had seen no solution which would leave us without a great deficit. Any feasible plan of unrestricted reciprocity involved differential duties; and involved—as to the bulk by agreement, and as to much from the necessity of the case—the substantial assimilation in their leading features, of the tariffs of the two countries. The absence of agreement would give to each country power to disturb at will the industrial system of the other; and unrestricted reciprocity, without an agreed assimilation of duties, was an unsubstantial dream. For example, he said the States could not, without destroying their industrial system, admit free our woollen or iron manufactures, the produce of wool or iron freely imported by us from beyond seas; nor could we, without destroying ours, levy on raw materials higher duties than those laid by the

States. Then, since any practicable arrangement substantially involved not only differential duties but a common tariff, unrestricted reciprocity became, in these its redeeming features, difficult to distinguish from commercial union.

Commercial union—establishing a common tariff, abolishing international custom houses and dividing the total duties between the two countries in agreed proportions—would be the more available, perhaps the only available plan. The tendency in Canada of unrestricted free trade with the States, high duties being maintained against the United Kingdom, would be towards political union, and the more successful the plan the stronger the tendency, both by reason of the community of interests, the intermingling of population, the more intimate business and social connections, and the trade and fiscal relations, amounting to dependency which it would create with the States, and of the greater isolation and divergency from Britain which it would produce; and also and especially through inconveniences experienced in the maintenance and apprehensions entertained as to the termination of the treaty. Therefore he said, "Whatever you or I may think on that head, whether we like or dislike, believe or disbelieve in political union, must we not agree that the subject is one of great moment, towards the practical settlement of which we should take no serious step without reflection, or in ignorance of what we are doing? Assuming that absolute

free trade with the States, best described as commercial union, may and ought to come, I believe that it can and should come only as an incident, or at any rate, as a well-understood precursor of political union, for which indeed we should be able to make better terms before than after the surrender of our commercial independence. Then so believing —believing that the decision of the trade question involves that of the constitutional issue, for which you are unprepared and with which you do not even conceive yourselves to be dealing—how can I properly recommend you now to decide on commercial union!"[1]

It is hardly necessary to say that the appearance of this letter was a profound and painful surprise to the Liberal party. There was light, perhaps, in the communication. Leading there was not. It was destructive, inconclusive, and embarrassing to the last degree. It was like Emerson's New England road, which ended in a squirrel track and ran up a tree. Various interpretations were put upon the manifesto, and these were as conflicting as they were uncertain. *The Globe* interpreted the letter as a declaration for political union; *The Empire* as a protest against the disloyal tendencies of the Liberal trade policy. Conflicting and contradictory efforts to find a positive policy in the letter led Mr. Blake to publish this additional statement: "The contra-

[1] Address of the Hon. Edward Blake to the members of the West Durham Reform Convention, March 5th, 1891.

dictory inferences to which a sentence in my Durham letter, detached from its context, has in several quarters unexpectedly given rise, conquer my reluctance to trespass again so soon upon your columns; and I crave space to say that I think political union with the States, though becoming our probable, is by no means our ideal, or as yet our inevitable future."[1]

All that can now be said is that only actual negotiations at Washington could have determined the exact force and justice of some of Mr. Blake's criticisms. If unrestricted reciprocity was unworkable except upon the lines of commercial union, then the term was not properly expressive of the intentions of the Liberal leaders, and stood for a proposition which they had refused to accept. No one will impugn Mr. Blake's motives, or deny the force of his reasoning and the courage of his utterance. It cannot be doubted that his letter was infinitely damaging to the Liberal party, and that he himself was deeply distressed over what he conceived to be the necessity for its publication. Notwithstanding the death of Sir John Macdonald and the revelations during the session of 1891 of gross frauds in some of the public departments, the bye-elections of 1892, which followed the work of the courts, resulted in almost continuous defeat for the candidates of the Opposition, and it is certain that Mr. Blake's letter had its effect in the constituencies.

[1] Letter to the Toronto *Globe*, March 11th, 1891.

Shortly after the general election, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir John Thompson, and the Hon. Geo. E. Foster proceeded to Washington with a view to negotiate for freer commercial intercourse. But their mission was abortive. In fact, negotiation was hardly attempted. The commissioners reported that the Government of the United States would not renew the Treaty of 1854, nor agree upon any commercial reciprocity which should be confined to natural products alone; and that, in view of the great development in the industrial interests of the United States and of the changed condition of the commercial relations of the two countries since the Treaty of 1854 was negotiated, it was necessary that a list of manufactured goods should be included in the schedule of articles for free or other exchange under any reciprocity arrangements which could be made. The Hon. Geo. E. Foster declared some months afterwards that Mr. Blaine demanded discriminatory duties against British and foreign goods, and not only made it a condition that an agreed list of manufactures should be placed upon the free list, but also that a uniform tariff on the lines of the American tariff, should be adopted by the two countries.[1] Gen. John W. Foster, assistant Secretary of State under Mr. Blaine, who was present at the conferences with the Canadian commissioners, dissented from this statement. He said Mr. Blaine did not insist that a uniform tariff would

[1] Ottawa despatch to the Toronto *Empire*, December 11th, 1892.

be necessary, nor much less, that it should be on the lines of the existing United States tariff. He did ask that the schedule should not be confined to natural products, but should include an agreed list of manufactured goods, and that the reciprocity should be confined to Canada and the United States. At any rate the terms were such as the Canadian commissioners could not accept, and the conferences abruptly terminated.

The real disposition of Washington was manifested in the McKinley Bill, which imposed prohibitory taxes upon our natural products and greatly incensed Canadian opinion against the United States. True, an incipient agitation for political union arose in Ontario, but it was not far-reaching, and its force was soon spent. President Harrison's threat to suspend the bonding privilege because tolls were imposed upon American vessels passing through the Canadian canals, notwithstanding that the Washington Government had never sought to secure for Canada the free use of the State canals as provided by the stipulations of the Washington Treaty, still further estranged relations between the two countries, while the promise of economic relief through increasing exports to Great Britain steadied Canadian opinion and reconciled Canadian producers to exclusion from the American market. These and other circumstances combined to modify the agitation for reciprocity, and when the National Liberal Convention met in Ottawa in June, 1893,

a trade plank was adopted which more clearly expressed the feeling of the Liberal party, and invalidated the more serious attacks which had been made upon the policy of unrestricted free trade with the United States. This thoroughly representative and thoroughly national convention declared that the tariff should be so arranged as to promote freer trade with the whole world, and more particularly with Great Britain and the United States, and further: "That having regard to the prosperity of Canada and the United States as adjoining countries, with many mutual interests, it is desirable that there should be the most friendly relations and broad and liberal trade intercourse between them; that the interests alike of the Dominion and of the Empire would be materially advanced by the establishing of such relations; that the period of the old reciprocity treaty was one of marked prosperity to the British North American colonies; that the pretext under which the Government appealed to the country in 1891 respecting negotiation for a treaty with the United States was misleading and dishonest and intended to deceive the electorate; that no sincere effort has been made by them to obtain a treaty, but that on the contrary, it is manifest that the present Government, controlled as they are by monopolies and combines, are not desirous of securing such a treaty; that the first step towards obtaining the end in view is to place a party in power who are sincerely desirous

of promoting a treaty on terms honourable to both countries; that a fair and liberal reciprocity treaty would develop the great natural resources of Canada, would enormously increase the trade and commerce between the two countries, would tend to encourage friendly relations between the two peoples, would remove many causes which have in the past provoked irritation and trouble to the Governments of both countries, and would promote those kindly relations between the Empire and the Republic which afford the best guarantee for peace and prosperity; that the Liberal party is prepared to enter into negotiations with a view to obtaining such a treaty, including a well-considered list of manufactured articles, and we are satisfied that any treaty so arranged will receive the assent of Her Majesty's Government, without whose approval no treaty can be made."

This declaration of policy healed the breach between Mr. Blake and the Liberal party. He intimated his approval and satisfaction to his old constituents, and in a speech at Strathroy in 1897 frankly restated his position, or rather interpreted his famous letter to the Liberals of West Durham. He pointed out that in 1891 the Liberal party went to the country with the policy of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States, or continental free trade. He fully recognized, as he had long recognized, the enormous and immediate advantage of the greatest practicable freedom of trade

with all countries, and most particularly with the country which was coterminous with ours; yet he was convinced, after the most careful consideration, that a policy which necessarily involved a great and general discrimination against Great Britain was not merely irreconcilable with our financial requirements, swollen as these had become, but also included of necessity the assimilation of our tariff with the tariff of the neighbouring Republic. He was satisfied that it would tend to produce a bad feeling in Great Britain, that it would tend towards severance from that country and to political union with the United States, and his belief was that his fellow-countrymen did not apprehend these results and were not prepared to adopt these conclusions. Leading friends of his differed wholly from these views. The election was suddenly precipitated in advance of the usual period, and he found himself in a painful dilemma. It was impossible for him to stand for Parliament without stating frankly to his constituents, as he had always done, the views he held upon public questions, and it was equally impossible for him, in the very crisis of a general election, to state those opinions without doing serious damage to friends whom he had long served and whom he deeply loved. He had, therefore, decided upon the whole that the course he had best pursue was one of silence for the time, which involved giving up the dearest aspirations of his own life, and his retire-

ment from Parliament. At that juncture the opportunity, unsought and unexpected, presented itself, which opened the door to his services elsewhere, which had been closed in the country to which he belonged. A year later the Liberal party held a great convention, at which they laid down a fresh policy on the trade question, to which generally it was his great pleasure to give his adhesion, for, indeed, it was that which he had always maintained himself.[1]

This is, at least, a satisfactory interpretation of the West Durham letter, even though it discovers tendencies in the policy of unrestricted reciprocity, and argues conclusions from the attitude of the Liberal party which Mr. Blake's successors in the direction of the party organization could not accept as the necessary consequences of their programme as developed in caucus and presented to the country.

[1] Speech at Strathroy, November 24th, 1897.

CHAPTER XXIII

LIBERAL MINISTERS AT WASHINGTON

IT is convenient to consider now the efforts made by the Liberal Ministry which came into office in 1896 to give effect to the resolutions of the national convention, in so far as concerns trade with the United States. During Mr. Cleveland's second Administration, the tariff duties against Canadian products were materially lowered. But Mr. McKinley succeeded to the Presidency in 1896, and a Republican Congress restored the prohibitory tariff against Canada. The appointment of the Joint High Commission, however, arose directly out of the desire of the United States to acquire still more exclusive ownership of the Alaskan seal fisheries. The Washington Government was not at all content with the decision of the Paris arbitration, which provided in effect that as no exclusive rights within the Behring Sea had been conferred upon Russia or exercised by her prior to the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, therefore Canada should have equal right of access to the Behring Sea with the United States. Regulations were also established under the award of Paris requiring that seals should be captured only at certain seasons, under certain conditions, and with

stipulated weapons to be used in the fisheries. The United States claimed that under these regulations seal life was rapidly disappearing from Behring Sea. Accordingly, in November, 1897, experts from both countries considered conditions in the seal fishing grounds, and reported that: "It was not possible during the continuance of the conservative methods at present in force upon the Pribyloff Island for the further safeguarding of the protected zone at sea, that any pelagic killing could result in the actual extermination of the species."

Upon the publication of this report, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Louis Davies visited Washington. During the consideration of the position of the seal fisheries, it was proposed that the whole series of open questions between the United States and Canada should be taken up and settled. This proposition was mutually accepted, and an understanding reached as to the subjects to be discussed. These were: (1) the Alaskan and Atlantic fisheries; (2) the Alaskan boundary; (3) the trade relations of the two countries; (4) the agreement limiting the number of war ships on the Great Lakes; (5) the alien labour laws; (6) the bonding privileges; (7) the preservation of fish in contiguous waters; (8) the conveyance of prisoners through the territory of either nation by the officers of the other; (9) reciprocity in wrecking.

A Joint High Commission was subsequently constituted, with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Richard

Cartwright, Sir Louis Davies, Mr. John Charlton, M.P., and Lord Herschell as the British Plenipotentiaries; Sir James Winter, as the representative of Newfoundland; and Senator Fairbanks of Indiana, Senator Gray of Delaware, the Hon. J. W. Foster, Congressman Dingley of Maine, and Mr. J. A. Kasson and Mr. T. Jefferson Coolidge of the State Department, as the representatives of the United States. Mr. Dingley died while the Commission was sitting, and was replaced by Congressman Sareno Payne of New York State. Baron Herschell, too, who was made chairman of the Commission, met with an accident at Washington and died, just as the Commission had completed its labours. It is proper to say that Mr. Dingley, although a stalwart protectionist and the author of the tariff measure which still bears so heavily against Canadian products, manifested a large and tolerant spirit in his treatment of many of the questions which came under the purview of the Commission; while Canada found Lord Herschell a liberal and resolute champion of her contentions. As Sir Wilfrid Laurier said in the House of Commons, "He fought for Canada not only with enthusiasm, but with conviction and devotion."

The Commission sat at Quebec from August 23rd until October 10th, 1898, and subsequently at Washington from November 9th, 1898, until February 20th, 1899, when an adjournment was made without practical results from its deliberations.

During the prolonged sittings of the Commission, laborious and exhaustive examination was made of many of the subjects under review; and time and again there seemed prospect of a comprehensive settlement of the disputed questions between the two countries. It is apparent from the schedule of subjects considered that the United States sought vastly greater concessions from Canada than the British Provinces claimed from the Republic. We sought little beyond freer access to American markets, and a more satisfactory determination of our rights in the Atlantic fisheries, and these boons the American commissioners were very reluctant to concede. They naturally desired that the treaty should cover a large schedule of manufactured goods, and we were equally concerned for the removal of American duties on natural products. But Mr. Dingley and his associates knew that protectionist sentiment was firmly rooted in the agricultural communities of the United States, and particularly among the farmers of the border counties, while the Canadian commissioners were bound to remember that protectionism in Canada had its stronghold in the manufacturing classes. Progress was slow and difficult; but before the Commission arose it was understood that a schedule had been arranged which provided practically for free trade in the products of the mines, for a considerable schedule of agricultural products, and for a careful and judicious readjustment of the duties on certain manufactures.

The negotiations for reciprocity in wrecking were less successful. Under existing regulations, if a Canadian ship goes ashore in American waters, she can be assisted only by an American wrecking crew operating in an American vessel, and Canada naturally maintains the same regulations against American vessels wrecked in Canadian waters. It is a barbarous survival of mediæval protectionism, but even if a treaty had been drafted by the Commission, it is doubtful if it would have covered reciprocal wrecking. The treaty would, however, have provided regulations for fish preservation by the establishment of uniform close seasons on the Great Lakes and all contiguous waters, and for restocking the sources of supply.

A thorough consideration was had of the agreement which limits the number of war-vessels to be maintained on the Great Lakes by Great Britain and the United States. This convention arose out of the war of 1812-14, when some sanguinary conflicts occurred on the lakes between British and American vessels. With the object of preventing a costly competition for their control by the maintenance of fleets thereon, a convention was concluded in 1817, under which His Britannic Majesty and the Government of the United States agreed that only four small vessels of a definite size should be maintained upon such waters. This convention was never embodied in a treaty, and its provisions were terminable upon six months'

notice by either party thereto. The agreement forbade not only the maintenance but the construction of war-vessels. This, however, mattered very little until ship-building industries sprang up at Cleveland and other American ports on the lakes. The ship-builders at these ports strongly urged that they be permitted to compete with the ship-builders on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts in the construction of American war-vessels, and as a preliminary to this they made a demand that the convention of 1817 be abrogated. The demand was not quite reasonable in consideration of the fact that war-vessels built in American ports on the lakes could reach the open sea only through Canadian canals which could be closed to them; but the ship-builders probably meant to secure passage-way to the sea for such vessels by the threat that if this were not granted the United States would construct and maintain a fleet on the lakes. Another reason urged for the abrogation of the convention of 1817 was that in the event of war over one hundred vessels of the British navy are of sufficiently light draught to pass through the Canadian canals. These vessels could not be opposed by American war-vessels, and would completely dominate the lakes. The British commissioners were reluctant to disturb the old convention, which of course the United States could easily terminate; but in return for equivalent concessions elsewhere, on the special advice of Lord Herschell, they might

possibly have agreed to allow passage through the Canadian canals of war-vessels partially constructed on the upper lakes, but still unarmoured and unequipped. There was no more delicate point in the negotiations, and the British commissioners well understood that Canadian feeling on the subject was particularly sensitive and ebullient.

It was also desired to abolish the alien labour laws and to remove all restrictions upon artisans and labourers passing from one country to the other in search of employment. The original intention of the Alien Labour Law of the United States was to prevent aliens coming in under contract and taking the place of workmen on strike. The law was carelessly drafted, and in 1887-88, the officers charged with its enforcement at Detroit and Buffalo took advantage of the powers conferred to stop Canadians entering the States in search of employment. In cases where families were left behind in Canada, the workman was either deported or required to take his household to the United States. After a lengthy agitation a similar law was placed upon the Canadian statute book in 1897. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, however, expressly stated that the law should apply only to countries which enforced alien labour regulations against Canadians, and that whenever these regulations should be removed the Canadian law would become inoperative. The chief prosecutions under the Canadian law have been in cases where labourers were brought

in under contract during disputes between employers and employed. In some cases, however, in Northern Ontario, men have been deported who had refused to bring their families over and settle in Canada as permanent citizens. Canada's contention in the negotiations was that the repeal of the law on both sides would be advantageous, and the American attitude seems to have been cordial and sympathetic.

The Commission had also to consider the various regulations adopted from time to time for the passing of goods in bond through adjacent territories of the United States and Canada. Before the coming of railways the bulk of the supplies imported into Upper Canada were brought in during the summer season by the St. Lawrence, which was also the great highway for exports destined for Europe. It was obvious that a port shut up for six months of the year did not afford adequate means of communication, and as early as 1836 there was an agitation in Canada for the right of importing goods in bond from Europe by New York and other American ports. An agreement was made some time afterwards, by which this privilege was obtained, but it was not until 1853 that exportation in bond was granted. The traffic ever since has been carried on in greatly increasing volume, and it would now be difficult, except under stress of national self-preservation, to bring in all the goods imported from Europe and send out the products exported

by means of the St. Lawrence during the season of navigation, and through St. John and Halifax and other ports in the Maritime Provinces during the winter. From Canada's point of view the conclusion of a permanent bonding arrangement in any treaty intended to be a final settlement between the two countries became a necessity. The bridging of the Niagara gorge and the opening up of vast territories in the American north-west, made possible a similar bonding arrangement, by which American imports from England for the west, and products moving from the west to the eastern States and to Europe, passed through Canada, entering at Niagara, and leaving Canadian territory at Detroit and Sarnia. Ontario juts so far south that this was regarded as a shorter and more convenient route between the east and west. Many American publicists and statesmen hold that the freight rates from the north-western States would be greatly increased were the bonding privilege through Canada cut off; and hence the American west is quite as strongly in favour of the continuation of the bonding arrangements with Canada as are the Canadians. The various proposals for the construction and operation of short grain routes from the western States to Europe almost all involve passage in bond through Canadian canals or across Ontario from such ports as Parry Sound, Midland, Owen Sound, and Collingwood to the St. Lawrence and to Boston and

Portland. In connection with the bonding privilege there was also involved the question of the haulage of goods destined for the New York and other eastern markets by the Canadian Pacific Railway from points of entry on the Pacific, and similarly of goods for eastern Canadian points landed at San Francisco. More than once the threat of suspension of the bonding privilege has been held over Canada by the Washington Government, and only substantial concessions on the part of Canada could have induced the American commissioners to consent to the permanent and unassailable establishment of bonding arrangements.

A great concession was sought from Canada in connection with the fur fisheries in pursuance of the determined policy of the United States to make a closed lake of Behring Sea. The presence on the Commission of Mr. Foster, who was chief counsel for the United States at the Paris Arbitration, and the chief representative of this feature of American policy, made it practically certain that no substantial adjustment of other questions could be effected, if at this point the British commissioners maintained an illiberal attitude. The American proposals were in effect that Canada should retire from pelagic sealing in Behring Sea, and that Canadian vessel owners and other persons interested in the pelagic sealing industry should receive compensation from the American Government. Negotiations proceeded so far that a schedule was drawn up fixing

the amount to be paid by the United States in the event of Canada withdrawing from pelagic sealing, and if equivalent concessions had been secured elsewhere the British commissioners would probably have accepted the draft agreement. If we contrast the attitude of the United States towards the fur fisheries of the Pacific with their determined non-recognition of Canadian treaty rights in the fisheries of the Atlantic coasts, we shall receive an illuminative exposition of American policy, and an explanation of the prejudiced manifestations against the Republic which sometimes reach the surface in Canada.

It was, however, the question of the boundary between Canada and Alaska which finally determined the fate of the negotiations. There was here involved the delimitation of the boundary along that portion of Alaska, from Mount St. Elias to the southern extremity of Prince of Wales Island, known as the coast strip. Under the treaties between Russia and Great Britain of 1825, and between Russia and the United States in 1867, it was provided that the line of demarcation should follow the summit of the mountains parallel to the coast, and that when these mountains should prove to be at a distance of over ten leagues from the ocean, the boundary should be formed by a line parallel to the windings of the coast, and which should never exceed a distance of ten marine leagues therefrom. Canada claimed that there was a well-defined coast

range which should form the boundary, and that following this line the greater part of the Lynn canal should be in Canadian territory. The United States in effect claimed that the boundary should follow the sinuosities of the coast, thus leaving the great inlets and the entire coast line in American possession. The provisions of this treaty had never been carried out. The boundary had remained undefined and no special inconvenience had resulted until the discovery of gold in the Klondyke in 1897. The only available winter route to the new gold fields lay by the Lynn Canal and over the Alaskan mountains. The Americans established a port at the head of the Lynn Canal, and claimed jurisdiction. They had already been in practical occupation of this territory, but the fact that all Canadian goods intended for the Klondyke had to be transhipped through an American port in the disputed district and under vexatious regulations, made the question of the boundary one of immediate importance. Pending the final decision a *modus vivendi* has been in operation, under which the summit of the range at the head of the Lynn Canal is regarded as a provisional boundary, while the Americans retain possession of the slope towards the head of the canal.

Here the attitude of the United States was unyielding. The British commissioners offered as a compromise to leave Dyea and Skagway in possession of the United States if the American

commissioners would agree that Canada should retain Pyramid Harbour, and so secure a highway into the Yukon district. This proposition was designed to make common water of the Lynn Canal, while leaving much of the territory in dispute to the United States. The proposal was rejected by the American representatives, and Canada then offered to refer the whole question to arbitration in order to ascertain the true boundary under the Anglo-Russian treaty. The British commissioners suggested that the arbitrators should be three jurists of repute, one to be named by the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council, one to be appointed by the President of the United States, and the third to be a high international authority who would act as umpire. This proposition was also rejected, and the American plenipotentiaries then suggested a tribunal of six jurists, three of whom should be appointed by the United States and three by Great Britain. In reply, Canada had to say that this proposal did not "provide a tribunal which would necessarily, and in the possible event of differences of opinion, finally dispose of the question." Canada offered to agree to an arbitration in the very terms of the reference for the settlement of the dispute over the Venezuelan boundary which was imposed upon Great Britain by the disturbing message of President Cleveland. But in vain. No basis for an arbitration could be reached. The American commissioners even

objected to the selection of an European umpire, and sought, indeed, to select for the presidency of the board of arbitration a jurist from the South American republics. In the judgment of the British commissioners it was useless to settle only a few minor questions where the balance of advantage would go to the United States. They, therefore, reported that they were unwilling to proceed "until the boundary question had been disposed of, either by agreement or reference to arbitration."

It is within the truth to say that the spirit of Congress was adverse to any liberal agreement with Canada either for the extension of trade, or for the adjustment of other disturbing questions. If Mr. McKinley and Sir Wilfrid Laurier could have determined the issue of the negotiations, a large and beneficent arrangement would probably have resulted. But Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues learned what Sir John Macdonald in consequence of his long enduring term of office in Canada so well understood,—they learned that the Republican leaders of the United States are stubbornly and invincibly protectionist, that American policy is essentially exclusive and autocratic, that the American temper resents official dealing with foreign communities, and that a treaty-making prerogative which depends for its efficiency upon a legislative body independent of the executive, and subject to all the passions and prejudices of an arrogant democracy, is at most a feeble and timid organ of Government.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SCHOOL QUESTION

IT is doubtful if the Equal Rights organization left any abiding impress upon the legislation of Ontario or Quebec, but to that movement can be traced the abolition of denominational schools, and of the use of French as an official language in Manitoba. The movement began in an agitation to force disallowance of an act of the Quebec Legislature, and ended in an agitation to prevent interference with an act of the Manitoba Legislature. It is true also that the arguments which influenced Parliament against disallowance of the Jesuit Estates' Act were very much the arguments which protected the Legislature and people of Manitoba from interference by the federal authority. The first word in an agitation which shook all Canada in its stormy progress, and finally overturned a Government at Ottawa, was spoken in 1889 by the Hon. Joseph Martin, Attorney-General of Manitoba, at a meeting in Portage la Prairie, at which he and Mr. D'Alton McCarthy were the chief speakers. Mr. McCarthy was fresh from attack upon the Separate School system of Ontario, and inspired by the brief but formidable ascendancy of the Equal Rights movement. When he had advanced his familiar arguments against ecclesiastical influence

in Canadian politics, the evils of a sectarian school system, and the denationalizing tendency of dual language, Mr. Martin intervened with the practical and far-reaching announcement that the provincial Government had determined to abolish the official use of French in the Legislature and courts of the province, and to establish a national and non-sectarian school system. He added that if the Constitution prevented the enactment of the legislation the provincial Government would appeal to the Imperial authorities for its amendment.[1] The statement was generally unexpected, and was as disturbing as it was revolutionary. The few who had thought upon the question had the general impression that Separate Schools in Manitoba were protected by constitutional guarantees as in Ontario and Quebec, and that no Government subject to the common political influences would be likely to disturb the system. There was likewise the higher consideration that a constitutional compact should not be lightly violated, and that the Manitoba Act of Union, like the Confederation Settlement, was a conclusive determination, in so far as the acts applied, of the rights of the religious minorities to maintain a Separate School system, and to devote their proportion of the school taxes to the support of denominational education.[2]

[1] Speech of the Hon. Joseph Martin at Portage la Prairie, August 5th, 1889.

[2] Before Mr. Martin spoke at Portage la Prairie there were intimations more or less direct of the intention of the Manitoba Govern-

The Manitoba Government, however, proceeded to give legislative effect to Mr. Martin's declaration, and at the session of 1890 passed acts abolishing the Roman Catholic schools and establishing a non-sectarian system of education throughout the province. Legal proceedings were at once instituted on behalf of the Roman Catholics to determine the constitutionality of this legislation, and a public issue of the first consequence arose in provincial and in national politics. The demand for disallowance of the provincial statutes was refused at Ottawa, and it remained for the courts to determine if the acts were within the competence of the Legislature, and

ment to abolish Separate Schools and the official use of French. The first distinct announcement of the Greenway programme appeared in the Winnipeg *Sun*. A despatch to the Toronto *Mail* of August 2nd, 1889, said, "*The Sun* to-night says the next session of the local Legislature promises to be the most interesting and exciting ever held in the province. The local Government have resolved to take the bull by the horns and to accept Mr. D'Alton McCarthy's advice of adopting a fight with the ballot. Thus it is understood to be the settled policy of the Government to introduce a measure at the next session abolishing dual languages, that is, the use of the French language in the province. Documents and statutes will be printed only in the English language. The Government have also decided to grapple with the Separate School question, and means will be advised to knock them out, despite the reading of the law bearing on the question. An educational measure revolutionizing the whole system in the province will be introduced. The Board of Education will be wiped out and the portfolio of Minister of Education will likely be taken by one of the present Ministers, as there is no desire to create a fifth salaried Minister. He will have a deputy, who will perform duties very similar to those of the Superintendent of Education. By a new act the position of Superintendent of Education will be wiped out. It is understood that he will receive notice to that effect in a few days."

if so, whether or not the federal power could intervene to restore to the Roman Catholics of the province the privileges of which they had been deprived.

There was no public system of education in Manitoba prior to the organization of the province in 1870, and such denominational schools as existed were supported by the voluntary contributions of the various communions. But in 1871 a system of education was established, which was distinctly denominational, and under which the Catholics of Manitoba received as liberal treatment as the Catholics of Ontario and the Protestants of Quebec. This system, as stated, was abolished in 1890, and succeeded by the acts whose constitutionality was now to be determined. The first sub-section of the twenty-second section of the Manitoba Act declares that the province shall not have power to pass any legislation which "shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law or practice in the province at the Union." This was doubtless intended to give a constitutional guarantee for Separate Schools in Manitoba; but when the appeal taken by the Catholic minority had made its way through the Canadian courts to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, it was there decided that the legislation of 1890 was constitutional inasmuch as the only right or privilege which Roman Catholics then enjoyed was the right or privilege of

establishing such schools as they preferred, and maintaining these by their own contributions.

Thereupon a second appeal was taken under sub-section two of the twenty-second section of the Manitoba Act, which provides that, "An appeal shall lie to the Governor-General-in-Council from any act or decision of the Legislature of the province or of any provincial authority, affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to education." The Supreme Court decided that even under this section no right of interference was vested in the central Government, and mainly upon the grounds that every presumption must be made in favour of the constitutional right of a legislative body to repeal the laws which it has itself enacted, and that an enactment irrevocably held by the Judicial Committee to be *intra vires*, could not have illegally affected any of the rights and privileges of the Catholic minority. The Judicial Committee, however, reversed this judgment, and found that the Governor-General-in-Council had jurisdiction in the premises, but added: "The particular course to be pursued must be determined by the authorities to whom it has been committed by the statute. It is not for this tribunal to intimate the precise steps to be taken. Their general character is sufficiently defined by the third sub-section of section twenty-two of the Manitoba Act." This sub-section provides for action by the Governor-General-

in-Council in case a provincial Government fails or refuses to remedy grievances of a religious minority occasioned by provincial legislation, and authorizes the Parliament of Canada to make remedial laws for the due execution of such measures as may be adjudged necessary in the circumstances. But while the Judicial Committee declined to give explicit direction to the federal authority, they closed their judgment with these pregnant sentences: "It is certainly not essential that the statutes repealed by the Act of 1890 should be re-enacted, or that the precise provisions of these statutes should again be made law. The system of education embodied in the Acts of 1890 no doubt commends itself to, and adequately supplies the wants of, the great majority of the inhabitants of the province. All legitimate ground of complaint would be removed if that system were supplemented by provisions which would remove the grievances upon which the appeal is founded, and were modified so far as might be necessary to give effect to these provisions."

This judgment of the Privy Council placed the federal Government in a position of extraordinary difficulty. The authorities of Manitoba were bound to resist the restoration of the Separate School system by federal action, and Dominion Ministers, whether they acted or refused to act, must be exposed to grave political danger. The Roman Catholic ecclesiastics were in the mood to demand full restoration of the privileges of which the Cath-

olic people had been deprived, while influential elements in the Conservative party were in complete sympathy with the action of Manitoba, and resolutely opposed to federal intervention. For years the Conservative party of Ontario under Mr. Meredith, had agitated for a larger measure of public control over Catholic schools, and the attitude of many of his supporters menaced the very existence of the system. There were still manifestations of that extraordinary condition of public feeling which found expression in the bigoted and intolerant crusade of the Protestant Protective Association, while Mr. McCarthy and the element he represented had a commanding influence in many constituencies.[1] It was necessary not only to

[1] The P.P.A., as it was called, was transplanted into Canada from the United States. Its avowed object was to challenge the so-called "solid Catholic vote." It was particularly active in municipal elections in Toronto, Hamilton, and other cities in Ontario. It threw its whole strength against the Liberal Government of the province in the general election of 1894, and was professedly hostile to Sir John Thompson. The organization demanded Government inspection of convents and religious institutions and the abolition of Separate Schools. The obligation required members to declare they would not allow a Roman Catholic to enter the Order; would not employ a Roman Catholic in any capacity if the services of a Protestant could be secured; would not aid in building or maintaining by their resources any Roman Catholic church or institution; would do all in their power to retard and break down the power of the Pope; would not enter into any controversy with a Roman Catholic upon the subject of the Order; would refuse to enter into any agreement with a Roman Catholic to strike or create a disturbance whereby Roman Catholic employees might undermine and replace the Protestants; that in all grievances they would seek only Protestants, and counsel with them to the exclusion of all Roman Catholics; that they would not countenance the nomination in any caucus

turn the Conservatives of Ontario from the attack upon Separate Schools and clerical influence, but to obtain their assent to a political alliance with the Catholic hierarchy, and their active aid and sympathy for a policy designed to force Separate Schools upon Manitoba. Upon the other hand 40 per cent. of the population of Canada adhered to the Catholic Church, and it could only be expected that the mass of Catholics would sympathize with their ecclesiastics and with their co-religionists in the western province. A striking incident of the situation was that Mr. Mackenzie Bowell, one of the leaders of the Orange Association, had succeeded to the premiership upon the death of Sir John Thompson, and that the sentiment of the Order in Manitoba and throughout Canada in fidelity to its historical faiths and traditions, was necessarily antagonistic to State recognition and State support of sectarian—and more particularly of Roman Catholic—institutions.

It has been understood that Sir John Thompson had a definite policy for the determination of the Manitoba School question, and it is certain that he was less concerned than many of his contemporaries over the prospect of its intrusion into federal politics. Nothing in his speeches goes beyond the declaration that the Government would stand by

or convention of a Roman Catholic for any office in the gift of the Canadian people; and would not vote for nor counsel others to vote for any Roman Catholic; and would endeavour at all times to place the political positions of the Government in the hands of Protestants.

the constitutional law of the country.[1] All that he said on the subject was characterized by that cool-headedness and firm judicial temper for which he was distinguished. He was conscious, no doubt, of the suspicions to which a Roman Catholic must be exposed in dealing with such a question; and while there can be no reason to think that he would have shrunk from any proper defence of the interests of his Church, he would probably have been slow to strain the Constitution in order to serve his co-religionists. There was the simple truth in the statement which he made on one occasion, that he did not occupy his responsible position in the country through any effort of his own, or through any struggle of his for political distinction; and his ascendancy in his own Cabinet was so complete, and his influence with the sober-minded elements of the nation so great, that if he could not have achieved a pacific and conciliatory settlement of the school question he would at least have prevented the great schism in the Ministry and have moderated the arrogance and intolerance of the Catholic bishops who assumed to dictate the policy of the country. He had well said that moral and religious problems which come home to the convictions of the people are dangerous to the welfare of the State if approached in any partisan or political spirit; and that the only safe guide

[1] Speech at the annual banquet of the Toronto Board of Trade, January 5th, 1893.

to any safe result which he could see in such a connection was the exercise of toleration and concession so far as it did not infringe upon principle.[1] This, however, was not the spirit in which the agitation for the restoration of Separate Schools in Manitoba was conducted, and this was not the spirit in which the Bowell Administration undertook to deal with the province.

The first step taken by the federal Ministers consequent upon the judgment of the Privy Council on January 29th, 1895, was not to seek by negotiation for a basis of compromise with the provincial authorities, and for such modification of the provincial statutes as would remove established grievances, but to hear argument as to whether or not a remedial order should issue, and to decide without actual investigation into conditions in Manitoba, as to what measure of redress for the minority they should demand. Argument in accordance with this determination was made before a committee of the Privy Council by Mr. J. S. Ewart, Q.C., of Winnipeg, in behalf of the Catholic minority, and by Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, Q.C., in behalf of the Manitoba Government. No new facts were adduced and the chief, perhaps the only result of the proceeding, was to intensify sectarian spirit on either side of the controversy, and widen the quarrel between the province and the Dominion.

[1] Mr. J. Castell Hopkins' "Life and Work of Sir John Thompson," pages 303, 304.

The recommendation of the Committee of Council was put into the form of a remedial order, and the ungracious and defiant deliverance was served upon the Government of Manitoba. The Remedial Order declared that: "It seems requisite that the system of education embodied in the two Acts of 1890 shall be supplemented by a provincial act or acts which will restore to the Roman Catholic minority the rights and privileges of which such minority has been deprived," and the provincial Legislature was asked to consider whether its action should be permitted to be such as, while refusing to redress a grievance which the highest court in the Empire had declared to exist, might compel Parliament to give relief of which under the Constitution the provincial Legislature was the proper and primary source, and thereby permanently divest itself in a very large measure of its authority, and so establish in the province an educational system, which no matter what changes might take place in the circumstances of the country or the views of the people, could not be altered or repealed. The Order commanded Manitoba to restore to the Roman Catholic minority the rights and privileges of which they had been deprived, and to modify the acts of 1890 so far, and so far only, as might be necessary to give effect to the provisions restoring: (a) The right to maintain Roman Catholic schools in the manner provided for by the statutes repealed in 1890; (b) the right to share proportionately in any

grant made out of the public funds for the purposes of education; and (c) the right of exemption of Catholics from all payment or contribution to the support of any other schools. This was the language of menace and of intimidation, and was ill-fitted to moderate public feeling in the province or to form a good disposition for the consideration of a subject which touched the passions and prejudices of a very great body of the citizens.

In May, Lord Aberdeen summoned Mr. Greenway, the Premier, and Mr. Sifton, the Attorney-General of Manitoba, to Ottawa, where they had various conferences with the Governor-General. It was reported that as a result of these conferences a Joint Commission would be appointed to consider the defects of the old provincial system of education and to recommend such modifications and amendments of the existing system as would meet any well grounded complaints of the Catholic people. The negotiations came to nothing, however, and in June the Legislature of Manitoba met in special session and adopted a memorial in reply to the Remedial Order. It is not too much to say that the case throughout was handled for Manitoba with consummate skill and judgment, and that for clearness, directness, simplicity, and dignity, nothing in the literature of the controversy excels the despatches of the provincial Administration in explanation and defence of its position. The memorial now sent down to Ottawa said that compliance

with the terms of the Remedial Order would restore Catholic Separate Schools, with no more satisfactory guarantee for their efficiency than existed prior to 1890. These schools as conducted under the Roman Catholic section of the Board of Education were inefficient, and did not possess the attributes of modern Public Schools. Their conduct, management, and regulation were defective, and as a result of leaving a large section of the population with no better means of education than was thus supplied, many people grew up in a state of illiteracy. It was pointed out that Manitoba laboured under great difficulties in maintaining an efficient system of primary education. The school taxes bore heavily upon the people. The large amount of land which was exempt from school taxes, and the great extent of country over which the small population was scattered, presented obstacles to efficiency and progress. The reforms effected in 1890 had given a strong impetus to educational work, but the difficulties which were inherent in the circumstances had constantly to be met. It was obvious that the establishment of a set of Roman Catholic schools, followed by a set of Anglican schools, and possibly Mennonite, Icelandic and other schools, would so impair the existing system that any approach to even the prevailing general standard of efficiency would be quite impossible. The provincial Ministers said they contemplated the inauguration of such a state of affairs with grave apprehension, and had

no hesitation in saying that there could not be suggested any measure which to their minds would more seriously imperil the development of the province.

They insisted that when the Remedial Order was made there was not available to the federal Government full and accurate information as to the working of the former system of schools in Manitoba, and that there was also lacking the means of forming a correct judgment as to the effect upon the province of the changes which the order demanded. They submitted that it was not yet too late to make a full and deliberate investigation of the whole subject, and they declared that should such a course be adopted they would cheerfully assist in affording the most complete information available. An investigation of such a kind would furnish a substantial basis of fact upon which conclusions could be formed with a reasonable degree of certainty. It was of the first consequence that no hasty action should be taken in a matter which involved the religious feelings and convictions of different classes of the people of Canada and the educational interests of a province which was expected to become one of the most important in the Dominion.

This moderate and conciliatory memorial was met by a rejoinder from the Ottawa Government which traversed much of the ground covered by the Remedial Order. The reply, while less peremptory

in its tone and less definite in its demand, was substantially a refusal to make investigation into conditions in the province, and substantially an argument for the restoration of the denominational school system. It was contended that the religious opinions and rights which had been recognized in the judgment of the Privy Council could be sufficiently met by the Legislature without impairing the efficiency, or proper conduct, management, and regulation of the Public Schools; and the rejoinder also embodied a statement made in Parliament by the Hon. George E. Foster, that if the Manitoba Government failed to make a settlement of the question which would be reasonably satisfactory to the Catholic minority the Dominion Parliament would be called together not later than the first Thursday of January, 1896, and that the Dominion Government would then be prepared to introduce and press to a conclusion such legislation as would afford an adequate measure of relief to the minority based upon the lines of the judgment of the Privy Council and the Remedial Order.[1]

Throughout all the early period of this disturbing controversy, Mr. Laurier maintained a discreet and judicial attitude. The position of the leader of the Opposition was not less difficult than that of the federal Ministers. He did not believe that a policy of coercion could succeed. He was thoroughly

[1] Hansard, July 8th, 1895, page 3,997.

persuaded that sympathetic treatment of minorities was conducive to national stability and national solidarity. He shrank from a quarrel with the Church to which he belonged. He could not think that the forces which the Remedial Order would range behind the Government could be successfully resisted. He had fought many a battle against presumptuous federal interference with provincial legislation; and while bound to admit that Manitoba's control over education was limited by constitutional restrictions, he was yet convinced that only by the free action of the Legislature could the Catholic people receive effective and enduring redress of any grievances arising out of the abolition of the Separate School system. He could not argue the question as one of abstract provincial rights, nor could he contend for an absolute restoration of Separate Schools, if it could be established that under the Public School system the conscientious convictions of Roman Catholics were fairly respected. Thus he favoured investigation, condemned the policy of the Remedial Order, and pleaded for a settlement by compromise and conciliation.[1]

Dealing in Parliament with the statement of Archbishop Taché, that the schools created by the provincial Acts of 1890 were in fact Protestant rather than non-sectarian, he held that if the statement were well founded, injustice was done, and

[1] Hansard, March 8th, 1893, pages 1,997-1,998.

redress should not be withheld.[1] He persistently declared his faith in the liberal and tolerant temper of the Canadian people, and his conviction that neither in Manitoba nor elsewhere could any element of the community be subjected to enduring injustice. But he could be neither persuaded nor coerced into acceptance of the policy of the Remedial Order, nor yet into any definite denial of Catholic grievances under the Manitoba statutes. He simply contended throughout that coercion was unwise and dangerous, that there should be investigation of the practical operation of the laws and the educational conditions of the province, and that only through conciliation and compromise could harmony be restored and a satisfactory settlement effected. He was denounced by the more extreme opponents of federal intervention with hardly less violence than were the federal Ministers, and was alternately cajoled and menaced by the agencies which sought to drive him into acceptance of the policy of coercion. He said on one occasion that he was within the lines of Torres Vedras; and the light, apt, and *insouciant* comparison of his situation with that of Wellington in the Peninsular

[1] Archbishop Taché, petitioning the federal Government for disallowance of the School Acts, said: "The two statutes, 53 Victoria, chapter 37 and 38, were passed in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to merge the Catholic schools with those of the Protestant denominations, and to require all members of the community, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, to contribute through taxation to the support of what are therein called Public Schools, but which are in reality a continuation of the Protestant schools."

campaign, recalled the bantering humour of the worn, old sleeper in Cataraqui, and broke the force of a thousand shafts from open foes, uneasy friends, and impatient advisers.[1] Like Lincoln, with his proclamation of freedom for the bondmen of the South, restrained by timid counsellers upon the one hand and harassed by eager abolitionists upon the other, he waited with infinite patience for the decisive moment, and when he struck, the blow was effective for his party and for his country. This thing they call irresolution is often the very pith and marrow of statesmanship.

In the meantime evidence accumulated that behind the bold front of the Remedial Order, doubt, hesitation, and dissension confused the counsels and paralyzed the action of the Bowell Cabinet. In March, 1895, it was announced that Sir Hibbert Tupper had resigned from the Government, but

[1] "I am accused by the Conservative press of having expressed no opinion upon this question. I have expressed an opinion more than once upon it, but I have not yet expressed the opinion which the ministerial press would like me to express. I am not responsible for that question, but I do not want to shirk it; I want to give you my views, but remember that war has to be waged in a certain way. When the Duke of Wellington was in Portugal, as those of you will remember who have read that part of the history of England, he withdrew at one time within the lines of Torres Vedras, and there for months he remained, watching the movements of the enemy. The French at that time were commanded by Marshal Massena, and Massena said: 'I want that man to come down from his lines; let him come down into the plain and I will thrash him, but I cannot assail him within the lines.' Gentlemen, I am within the lines of Torres Vedras. I will get out of them when it suits me, and not before."—Mr. Laurier at Morrisburg, October 8th, 1895.

the ground of his difference with his colleagues was never quite understood, and he soon resumed the administration of his department. It is believed that he sought to have Parliament dissolved and a general election held in advance of actual legislation under the Remedial Order. In Haldimand a bye-election became necessary in consequence of Dr. Montague's admission to the Cabinet, and a McCarthy candidate set up to oppose the new Minister was vigorously supported by Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Sifton, Attorney-General for Manitoba, who presented the case for his province in a series of singularly lucid and powerful addresses. The Minister was re-elected with a majority of 594, but the contest accentuated the divisions in the Conservative party, while the arguments advanced against the policy of coercion took firm hold on the country. Subsequent bye-elections in Ontario and Quebec returned opponents of the Government. In Ontario, however, the forces led by Mr. McCarthy seemed to be the dominant factor, while the results of contests in several constituencies revealed the Liberal party in a condition of almost mortal weakness.[1]

[1] In Antigonish, N.S. (April 17th, 1895), which became vacant through the death of Sir John Thompson, McIsaac, Liberal, was elected by a majority of 118, as against a Conservative majority of 222 in 1891. In North Ontario (December 12th, 1895) the vote was: McGillivray, Conservative, 2,085; Brandon, Patron, 1,289; Gillespie, Liberal, 1,096. In Cardwell (December 24th) the vote was: Stubbs, McCarthyite, 1,503; Willoughby, Conservative, 1,296; Henry, Liberal, 544. In Montreal Centre (December 27th) McShane, Liberal, had a majority

On December 12th, 1895, Mr. Clarke Wallace, Minister of Customs, and Grand Master of the Orange Association, withdrew from the Cabinet. Sir Charles Tupper, one of the great figures of the Conservative party for nearly half a century, was recalled from London, where, since 1883, with brief intervals of service in the House of Commons, he had occupied the post of High Commissioner for Canada. This was taken as conclusive evidence either of an impending general election, or of his appointment to the leadership in succession to Sir Mackenzie Bowell. Then on the very eve of the meeting of Parliament to give effect to the pledge of the united Cabinet "to introduce and press to a conclusion such legislation as would afford an adequate measure of relief to the minority based upon the lines of the judgment of the Privy Council and the Remedial Order," came the astounding announcement that seven of the Ministers had thrown up their portfolios, and that the Cabinet of Sir Mackenzie Bowell had utterly gone to pieces. This, whatever the operating causes, is the most sensational and humiliating incident in Canadian parliamentary history. There were probably influences at work which the country has never understood, and

over Hingston, Conservative, of 336, where in the previous election the Conservative majority was 1,214. In Jacques Cartier (December 30th) a Conservative majority of 276 iu 1891 was turned into a Liberal majority of 574. In West Huron (January 14th, 1896), made vacant by the appointment of the Hon. J. C. Patterson to the Lieut.-Governorship of Manitoba, Cameron, Liberal, was elected with a majority of 180.

it may be that the men who mutinied had great provocation. But it is still impossible to judge the event except upon its face, and in the light of the explanations made in Parliament, and even of all the evidence in mitigation that has yet appeared, censure lies upon the Ministers concerned and discredit attaches to the transaction.

Parliament was told in effect that Sir Mackenzie Bowell's colleagues did not think he was equal to the responsibilities of the premiership and the leadership of the Conservative party, and that it was necessary in the party interest and in the public interest that a stronger leader should be substituted. There was probably pretty general agreement among Conservatives, as among Liberals, that Sir Mackenzie Bowell lacked some of the essential qualifications for leadership, and when it is remembered that in the background stood the great figures of Sir John Macdonald and Sir John Thompson, or even that Sir Charles Tupper with all his dash, resource, and rugged virility was still available for the command, it is not surprising that there was dissatisfaction and uneasiness among Conservatives in the Cabinet and in the country. But there were few Conservatives indeed who had any word of approval for the heroic method adopted to remove Sir Mackenzie Bowell, and the Premier's observation that for months he had lived in a nest of traitors epitomized the public estimate of the whole unfortunate proceeding.

Sir Mackenzie Bowell made a determined attempt to reorganize his Cabinet, to the exclusion of Mr. Foster, Sir Hibbert Tupper, Mr. Haggart, Mr. Ives, Mr. Wood and Dr. Montague. But the striking Ministers instituted a system of pickets, very like the system adopted by unionists in a labour strike, and most of the stronger men who could have taken their places were persuaded to reject the Premier's overtures. The efforts which Sir Mackenzie Bowell had made when he formed his Government to induce Sir William Meredith to descend from the bench and take political office at Ottawa, were renewed but were again unsuccessful, and no better fortune was had with such men as Dr. Weldon of Halifax, and Sir George Kirkpatrick, then Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and throughout all his political life an admirable public servant. At last a compromise was effected under which Sir Mackenzie Bowell was to retain the premiership until the close of the session, when Sir Charles Tupper was to succeed, reorganize the Administration, and go to the country. It is just to say that under all these trying and humiliating experiences Sir Mackenzie Bowell bore himself with serenity and with dignity; and while history will say that he was an extreme partisan and will refuse to rank him among the greater statesmen of the Canadian Confederation, it will not deny that he kept clean hands and a good heart throughout a very long term of public service, and that his

fidelity to his convictions and loyalty to his party were proof even against the extraordinary treatment which he received at the hands of his own political household.[1]

[1] "Though with many misgivings we agreed to enter the Government under Mr. Bowell in succession to Sir John Thompson, we have nevertheless unitedly and loyally striven to the best of our ability to make it strong and efficient, and it has been with growing regret that we have seen our efforts result in a measure of success less than that for which we had hoped and striven. We are of the opinion that the Liberal Conservative party ought to be represented by the strongest Government possible to be secured from its ranks, that the necessity therefor was never greater than under existing circumstances, and we believe that such a Government can be formed without delay. This we have repeatedly urged upon the Premier, with the result that we found ourselves face to face with Parliament having a Government with its numbers incomplete, and with no assurance that the present Premier could satisfactorily complete it. Under these circumstances we thought it our duty to retire, and in this manner to pave the way, if possible, for the formation of a Government whose Premier could command the confidence of all his colleagues, could satisfy the Liberal Conservative party that its strongest elements were at its head, and impress the country that it had a Government which was united and had power to govern. We affirm with the utmost sincerity that the action we have taken has sprung from no feeling of personal dislike or of personal ambition, but has been solely dictated by our wish to sink all minor considerations in the presence of our great desire that the best interests of our party and country should be duly conserved."—Hon. Geo. E. Foster, Hansard, January 7th, 1896, page 10.

"I might naturally, I think, ask if these reasons were the sincere convictions of the gentleman who wrote them, or of the others who acquiesced in the sentiments. If so, how is it that the discovery was not made until we were in the beginning of a session, until it was impossible almost to proceed with the business of the country without having not only a disintegration of the Government itself, but treating the people of the country with, I was going to say, comparative contempt? Surely my colleagues knew my incapacity to govern before

The sitting member for Cape Breton resigned in order to provide a constituency for Sir Charles Tupper. A stormy campaign followed. During its progress the Catholic Bishop of Antigonish savagely denounced the opponents of the Administration's Manitoba school policy, and this and other similar utterances plainly revealed an organized clerical movement to enforce the ratification of the Remedial Order. But the blow which was delivered against Sir Mackenzie Bowell was the death-blow of the Administration. Public confidence could not

the meeting of Parliament and long before they sent in their resignations. Surely they could not have come to the opinion in so short a period that I was unfit to continue at the head of this Government. What occurred between the writing of that speech, (from the Throne), the placing of it in His Excellency's hands, the meeting of Parliament, and the delivery of that speech by His Excellency? What, I ask, could possibly have occurred, or what have you been told occurred, during those two or three days to lead them to the conclusion which impelled them to take so important a step as they have done? Had they come to me previous to the meeting of Parliament, had they met me in Council and said, 'We disagree with the policy which you have laid down;' had they said that there was, in any single particular, a difference of opinion upon the great issues that were agitating the people of the country, and they could not, by any possibility, be a party to it; or had they gone further and said, 'After one year and a quarter's experience of you as head of the Government, we have lost confidence in your ability to continue to direct the affairs of the country,' then I could have understood it. Then I could have said, 'Take the reins of Government, I will not stand in the way.' And I never shall stand in the way of the future success of that great party to which I have had the honour of belonging from boyhood up, and towards which I have done something for its prosperity and continuance in governing."—Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Senate Debates, January 9th, 1896, pages 3, 4.

be restored. The evidences of intrigue and dissension at Ottawa necessarily affected the spirit and unity of the party throughout the country. For, as Kipling says:

> This is the law of the jungle, as old and as true as the sky;
> And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf that shall break it must die;
> As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk, the law runneth forward and back,
> For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.

Just before Parliament met, the Manitoba Ministers sent down an answer to the Order-in-Council which the Dominion Government had adopted in July, and which contained the menace of federal legislation if the provincial Ministers failed to act according to the directions of the Remedial Order. The provincial authorities affirmed that the Privy Council did not declare how the powers of the Government or of Parliament ought to be exercised, nor did the court possess any authority to make such a declaration. The function of the court was to declare the constitutional powers of the Government and Parliament, and not their policy. The action to be taken in the exercise of such powers was purely a matter of statesmanship to be decided in the last resort by the people of Canada, and not by a court of law. The question of relief to the minority, therefore, came before the Governor-General-in-Council, and would now come before Parliament as a question of policy to be decided

upon its educational merits, subject always to the well recognized principle that the central authority ought not to interfere with a province, except in a case of the most urgent necessity. The Governor-General-in-Council was in no way bound by the Constitution to make a Remedial Order, granting the prayer of the appellants in whole or in part; nor was Parliament now bound by the Constitution to make a Remedial Order granting the prayer of the appellants in whole or in part; nor was Parliament now bound by the Constitution, expressly or by implication, to give effect to the Remedial Order in whole or in part. The remedy sought to be applied was fraught with great danger to the principle of provincial autonomy. An independent consideration of the subject, as well as the recognized constitutional practice in analogous cases, clearly indicated that it should only be made use of as a last resort, and after the clearest possible case had been made out. It was obvious that so drastic a proceeding as the coercion of a province, in order to impose upon it a policy repugnant to the declared wish of its people, could be justified only by clear and unmistakable proof of flagrant wrong-doing on the part of the provincial authorities.

The provincial Ministers argued that the question of whether or not there should be restoration of the privileges of which the minority in Manitoba had been deprived was one of public policy. They

regretted that the invitation extended by the Legislative Assembly to make a proper inquiry into the facts of the case had not been accepted, and that the federal Government had declared its policy without investigation. They declared that any proposal to establish a system of Separate Schools in any form would be rejected by Manitoba, and that the principle of a uniform, non-sectarian Public School system would be resolutely maintained. Referring to reported utterances that remedial legislation did not necessarily mean that the Remedial Order should be literally followed, or that the system of Separate Schools which existed prior to 1890 should be restored, they suggested that if remedial legislation in any other form than literal confirmation of the Remedial Order should be introduced, grave doubt would arise as to the competency of Parliament to pass such legislation, except it were first submitted to the Legislature of the province. If other legislation were contemplated, it might become necessary to amend the Remedial Order, and it was doubtful if any power existed to amend or rescind that Order. They again earnestly invited the federal authorities to undertake an inquiry sufficiently wide to embrace all available facts relating to the past or existing school system, and they said in conclusion: "In amending the law from time to time, and in administering the system, it is the earnest desire to remedy every well-founded grievance, and to

remove every appearance of inequality or injustice that may be brought to notice. With a view to so doing, the Government and Legislature will always be ready to consider any complaint that may be made in a spirit of fairness and conciliation. It seems, therefore, most reasonable to conclude that by leaving the question to be so dealt with, the truest interests of the minority will be better served than by an attempt to establish a system of Separate Schools by coercive legislation. Such a system, discredited as it is, will be from the outset crippled by reason of insufficient pecuniary support and ineffective educational equipment, and will be an injury rather than a benefit to those whom it is intended to serve."

In January, the Manitoba Legislature was dissolved in order to obtain a reaffirmation of the popular judgment in support of the national school system. Thirty-three out of the forty constituencies pronounced in favour of the school policy of the provincial Administration. Conferences between Sir Donald Smith, Mr. Dickey, Minister of Militia, and Senator Desjardins, with provincial Ministers at Winnipeg, resulted in nothing. The federal Administration could not abandon the policy of the Remedial Order. The provincial Government, in the heated condition of public feeling, could not accept any settlement short of absolute recognition of the Public School system.

The federal commissioners proposed that a measure should be passed by the Legislature then sitting, to provide that in towns and villages where there were resident, say, twenty-five Roman Catholic children of school age, and in cities where there were fifty of such children, the Board of Trustees should arrange that such children should have a school-house or school-room for their own use, where they might be taught by a Roman Catholic teacher; and Roman Catholic parents or guardians, say, ten in number, might appeal to the Department of Education from any decision or neglect of the Board in respect of its duty, and the Board should observe and carry out all decisions and directions of the Department on any such appeal. Provision should be made that schools wherein the majority of children were Catholics should be exempted from the requirements of the regulations as to religious exercises. Text-books should be permitted in Catholic schools such as would not offend the religious views of the minority, and which from an educational standpoint should be satisfactory to the Advisory Board. Catholics should have representation on the Advisory Board and on the Board of Examiners appointed to examine teachers for certificates. It was also proposed that Catholics should have assistance in the maintenance of a Normal School for the education of their teachers, and that the existing system of permits to non-qualified teachers in Catholic schools should be continued for two years,

to enable them to qualify, and then to be entirely discontinued. In all other respects the schools which Catholics attended were to be Public Schools, and subject to every provision of the education acts for the time being in force in Manitoba. In case a written agreement should be reached, and the necessary legislation passed, the Remedial Bill then before Parliament was to be withdrawn, and any rights and privileges which might be claimed by the minority in view of the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council should, during the due observance of such agreement, remain in abeyance and be not further insisted upon.

In reply the Manitoba Ministers pointed out that they had stipulated that during the conference the Remedial Bill should be held in abeyance, and that in the event of an agreement being reached the bill should be at once withdrawn. These stipulations were agreed to by the Dominion commissioners. But despite this understanding the bill had just been advanced a stage in the House of Commons, and the agreement made in behalf of the federal Government thus violated. They then proceeded to say that an amendment to the School Act embodying the terms of the memorandum submitted by the Dominion commissioners would divide the population for educational purposes into two classes, Roman Catholic and Protestant, giving to the Roman Catholic population distinct and special privileges as against the remaining portion

of the people. It would establish a system of State-supported Separate Schools for the Roman Catholic people, and would compel their support by the school taxes and legislative grants. Not only so, but the whole school organization—text-book regulations, constitution of Advisory Board, Boards of Examiners, and Normal School—would be modified to bring it into accord with the separation principle to an extent not usual even in places where regularly constituted Separate School systems obtain.

Separate Schools under the first clause of the memorandum submitted would result in a teacher having under his charge a comparatively small number of pupils of various ages and degrees of proficiency. The school could not therefore be properly graded, and could not attain the degree of efficiency reached by Public Schools in cities, towns, and villages. Grading of classes and mutual competition would be destroyed, and the Separate School would therefore of necessity be inferior. The organization of the Separate School would be compulsory, and Roman Catholics would be deprived by law of the right to send their children to the Public Schools. There seemed to be no precedent, even in Separate School legislation, for such a provision. In many cases it would be impossible to provide a separate building, and the Roman Catholic children would therefore be assigned a room in the Public School. It seemed beyond dispute that nothing could be worse than the separation of children into

two distinct bodies within daily view of each other. A voluntary Separate School system such as exists in Ontario, or such as Manitoba had prior to 1890, could be put into operation only where the Roman Catholic rates added to the legislative grant would be sufficient to maintain the school, but under the plan proposed this idea was not recognized. The school must be provided and maintained by the Public School trustees, and the contributions of the Roman Catholic ratepayers would only be a fraction of the cost of its maintenance. The bulk of the expense would, in fact, require to be met out of the taxes paid by non-Catholic ratepayers. It would be hard to conceive of a more indefensible and offensive method of compelling one portion of the people to pay for the education and sectarian religious training of the remainder.

The effect of clause two would be absolutely to divest the Legislature and Government of control over the schools so far as religious exercises and teaching were concerned. What would become of non-Catholic children while the religious education of the majority was proceeding? It would be impracticable to provide by statute that the text-books should be satisfactory to the Roman Catholic minority, but the provincial Ministers had no doubt that if other points could be agreed upon an arrangement as to text-books could be reached which would be mutually satisfactory. This part of the difficulty was, in fact, comparatively easy of adjust-

ment. They had no objection to the Catholic people being represented upon the Advisory Board and the Board of Examiners. In fact, Archbishop Taché was offered a seat on the Advisory Board. They could not, however, see any practicable way of embodying such provision in the statutes. It would also be impossible to give a statutory privilege of representation to one religious denomination without according the same privilege to others. The proposal to assist a Separate Normal School could not be considered. The Normal School was a technical training school for teachers, and there could be no argument advanced in favour of dividing the funds, or of separating Roman Catholic teachers in process of training from others.

The objections to the proposals of the federal commissioners were, in brief, as follows: First, the statutory division of the people into separate denominational classes; second, the necessary inferiority of the Separate Schools; third, impairment of the efficiency of the Public Schools through division of school revenues; fourth, the burdening of non-Catholic ratepayers by compelling them to maintain Separate Schools; fifth, the according of special privileges to one denomination which could not on principle be denied to all the others, but which in practice could not be granted to such others without entire destruction of the school system.

The provincial Ministers added that they were prepared to secularize completely the Public School

system, not as embodying the policy which the Government and Legislature of the province were themselves desirous of pursuing, but in order to attain a settlement of the dispute; or they would provide for religious exercises or teaching between half past three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Such teaching could be conducted by any Christian clergyman whose charge included any portion of the school district, or by any person satisfactory to a majority of the trustees who might be authorized by the clergyman to act in his stead. It could be provided that the trustees should allot the period fixed for religious exercises or teaching for the different days of the week to the representatives of the different religious denominations to which the pupils might belong, in such a way as to proportion the time allotted as nearly as possible to the number of pupils of the respective denominations in the school. Two or more denominations might have the privilege of uniting for the purpose of such religious exercises. No pupil should be permitted to be present at such exercises or teaching if the parents should object. Where the school-room accommodation at the disposal of the trustees permitted, instead of allotting different days of the week to different denominations, the trustees might direct that the pupils should be separated and placed in different rooms for the purpose of religious exercises as might be convenient.

The rejoinder of the Dominion commissioners pointed out that they had intended to agree that the Remedial Bill should be withdrawn only when the school question was settled, and not when the agreement for the conference was reached. They contended that sufficient weight was not given by the provincial Ministers to the undoubted legal position of the Roman Catholics. They certainly had important legal rights to Separate Schools, and the discussion of the advantages of such schools was therefore not relevant to the situation, and so likely to raise misleading issues. The Roman Catholic population contributed their share of all taxation for schools, and were entitled to obtain education for their children. It was now a question of the mode of that education in view of the rights held by the minority under the Constitution. The commissioners would not insist upon Normal Schools, and as to text-books and representation on the Boards, as a matter of practice and administration they found that the provincial Ministers raised in point of fact no objection. They did not ask that the Roman Catholics should have a separate right to elect trustees or otherwise have any special representation on the Board of Trustees. The proposed schools would be controlled by trustees elected by the whole body of ratepayers. The standard of efficiency maintained would naturally be higher than could be reached by Roman Catholics who refused on conscientious grounds to attend

the Public Schools, and were, therefore, obliged to maintain schools from their own private means without the aid of the legislative grant. Such schools would be more efficient, and the state of affairs under the system suggested would be much better for the community than that which would obtain under existing conditions, or under the Remedial Bill if it became law. They said they could not accept the reasoning of the provincial Ministers with respect to financial objections. What was proposed was that there should be in towns and villages twenty-five, and in cities fifty Roman Catholic children before they could ask for a separate room or building, while under the old law before 1890, under the Remedial Bill, and even under the existing provincial law, the presence of ten children only was necessary to the establishment of a school district. The argument that provision should be made for non-Catholic children was well taken and in accordance with the views of the Dominion commissioners, which were in this respect imperfectly expressed in the memorandum. They said in conclusion: "We once more appeal to you in the interests of the whole population of the province, indeed of the Dominion, as well as in the interests of the minority, to reconsider the decision at which you have arrived, and to make some proposal that we could regard as affording a chance of the settlement which we so earnestly desire."

In a final word from the provincial Ministers

it was said that in so far as the re-establishment of Separate Schools was concerned the question had for years been considered settled by the Legislature and people of the province. They had hitherto believed that a State-aided Separate School system and only that would be accepted by the minority. This view had been repeatedly stated, and they had not yet been authoritatively informed to the contrary. Their contention in this respect was shown to be correct by the proposition of the Dominion commissioners, which indubitably meant a system of schools separating by law Protestants from Roman Catholics, and wholly dependent for support upon municipal taxation and the legislative grant. It was further pointed out that any settlement between the Government of the Dominion and that of Manitoba must, by the very terms of the instructions to the federal commissioners, be subjected to the sanction of the representatives of the minority. The province was absolutely debarred from conceding a system of Roman Catholic and State-aided Separate Schools, while the representatives of the minority, and as a consequence, the federal Government would accept nothing less. Notwithstanding the failure of negotiations, the Government of the province would always be prepared to receive and discuss any suggestions which might be made with a view to removing any inequalities which could be shown to exist in the present law.

Parliament met on January 2nd, 1896, but the session was well advanced before the Remedial Bill was introduced. It contained 112 clauses, and, while not in exact conformity with the Remedial Order, embodied a distinct recognition of the principle of Separate Schools, and provided machinery and regulations for the organization and maintenance of the schools to be established thereunder. It was, in fact, a full satisfaction of the demands of the Catholic bishops, and naturally the ecclesiastics united in a determined effort to force its passage through Parliament. It becomes necessary, therefore, to consider their attitude, and to review the most desperate attempt at clerical coercion which even Canada has ever witnessed. Their position involved a clear assumption of supremacy within the realm of the State, and we had in Quebec a manifestation of the ancient spirit of Ultramontanism as fierce in its anathema of Liberal candidates and as destructive of public tranquility as that which put down Liberal principles and Liberal teachings with such merciless vigour during the sixties and seventies.

The bishops first issued a collective *mandement* inviting the electors to support only such candidates as would pledge themselves to restore Separate Schools to the Catholics of Manitoba. The document, though necessarily favourable to Conservative candidates under the circumstances, made no direct discrimination as between the two great political parties, and it remained open for such Liberals

as would accept its instructions to evade positive condemnation. A more vigorous campaign was opened by Mgr. Langevin, who had succeeded Archbishop Taché in the diocese of St. Boniface, and was, therefore, the natural spokesman of the Catholics of Manitoba. During the first weeks of 1896 he delivered inflammatory addresses throughout the parishes of Laprairie and Napierville in Quebec, and in the course of an address at Montreal said: "All those who do not follow the hierarchy are not Catholics. When the hierarchy has spoken it is useless for a Catholic to say the contrary, for if he acts that way he ceases to be a Catholic. Such a man can bear the title, but in my capacity as bishop I say this evening, and I say it with full authority, that a Catholic who does not follow the hierarchy on the school question is not a Catholic any longer. Who would give the title of Catholic to this man? What is the society or government which would give him the right to call himself Catholic, when, by my authority as a Catholic bishop, I declare that this man has no right to the title." The full policy of the Church was revealed in the letter which Father Lacombe, in the name of the bishops, presented to the Liberal leader. It was dated January 20th, 1896, and read as follows:

"In this critical time for the question of the Manitoba schools, permit an aged missionary, to-day representing the bishops of our country in this

cause which concerns us all, to appeal to your faith, to your patriotism and to your spirit of justice, to entreat you to accede to our request. It is in the name of our bishops, of the hierarchy and of Canadian Catholics, that we ask your party, of which you are the so worthy chief, to assist us in settling this famous question, and to do so by voting with the Government on the Remedial Bill. We do not ask you to vote for the Government, but for the bill which will render us our rights, which bill will be presented to the House in a few days. I consider, or rather, we all consider, that such an act of courage, good-will, and sincerity on your part and from those who follow your policy will be greatly in the interests of your party, especially in the general elections. I must tell you that we cannot accept your commission of inquiry for any reason, and we will do the best to fight it. If, which may God not grant, you do not believe it to be your duty to accede to our just demands, and that the Government which is anxious to give us the promised law, be beaten and over thrown, while keeping firm to the end of the struggle, I inform you with regret that the episcopacy, like one man, united to the clergy, will rise to support those who may have fallen to defend us. Please pardon my frankness which leads me to speak thus. Though I am not your intimate friend, still I may say that we have been on good terms. Always I have deemed you a gentleman, a respectable citizen,

and a man well able to be at the head of a political party. May Divine Providence keep up your courage and your energy for the good of our common country."

It became necessary for the Liberal leader to deal with this ultimatum, and to declare in unmistakable terms his repudiation of its spirit and of its assumptions. He had settled clearly and definitely the course that he would take, and while he had gloomy forebodings as to the issue for himself and his party, he could not now sacrifice the professions and the convictions of a lifetime at the dictation of the heads of the Church to which he belonged, and whose pretensions to supremacy in the civil sphere he had always opposed. It required rare courage to make the decision, and no man who knew the history of Canada as Mr. Laurier knew it could reasonably hope that political advantage would accrue from the position he was bound to take. He knew the power of the Catholic hierarchy, and greatly deplored the necessity for a quarrel which threatened immense political loss, and which he profoundly feared would lead many of his best friends to defeat in the constituencies. But the press had published Father Lacombe's letter broadcast, and he had no alternative but to make his reply in the face of the country. When the hour came for him to speak he took his ground without flinching, and with a simple and manly dignity which wholly became the issue and the circumstances.

On March 3rd, the Remedial Bill came up for its second reading, and it became necessary for Mr. Laurier to declare the policy of the Opposition. He made a strong and consistent argument on the general question, and reviewed at length the various steps leading up to the situation of the moment. He said that under the judgment of the Privy Council, Parliament had power to interfere, to pass the Remedial Order, and enforce it by legislation. It was, however, the first duty of the Government to investigate the complaints of the minority. But instead of making investigation they passed a drastic order-in-council, which they served upon Manitoba, and now, without inquiry and without information, they asked Parliament in the name of the minority to enact legislation to give effect to the Remedial Order. He declared in the name of the minority that the course of the Government was unconstitutional, weak, and dangerous. He disputed the contention that the Government were bound to act mechanically, and that upon the complaint of the minority, unsupported by evidence, the law of the majority should be set aside. Even if a wrong had been done it could not be righted by a bill passed in darkness and in ignorance, and which must be administered by a hostile Government. Only methods of conciliation and of persuasion could be effective, and only by a settlement so obtained could the question be solved and the minority benefited. He could not forget, he said, that the

policy which he had advocated and maintained all along had not been favourably received in all quarters, and he continued:

"Not many weeks ago I was told from high quarters in the Church to which I belong, that unless I supported the school bill which was then being prepared by the Government, and which we have now before us, I would incur the hostility of a great and powerful body. Sir, this is too grave a phase of this question for me to pass it by in silence. I have only this to say, even though I have threats held over me, coming, as I am told, from high dignitaries in the Church to which I belong, no word of bitterness shall ever pass my lips as against that Church. I respect it and I love it; but sir, I am not of that school which has been long dominant in France and other countries of continental Europe, which refuses ecclesiastics the privilege of having a voice in public affairs. No, I am a Liberal of the English school. I believe in that school which has all along claimed that it is the privilege of all subjects, whether high or low. whether rich or poor, whether ecclesiastic or layman, to participate in the administration of public affairs, to discuss, to influence, to persuade, to convince, but which has always denied, even to the highest, the right to dictate even to the lowest. I am here representing not Roman Catholics alone, but Protestants as well, and I must give an account of my stewardship to all classes. Here am I, a Roman

Catholic of French extraction, entrusted with the confidence of the men who sit around me, with great and important duties under our constitutional system of Government. I am here, the acknowledged leader of a great party composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants as well, in which Protestants must be in the majority, as in every party. Am I to be told—I, occupying such a position—that I am to be dictated to as to the course I am to take in this House by reasons that can appeal to the consciences of my fellow-Catholic members, but which do not appeal as well to the consciences of my Protestant colleagues? No! So long as I have a seat in this House, so long as I occupy the position I do now, whenever it shall become my duty to take a stand upon any question whatever, that stand I will take, not from the point of view of Roman Catholicism, not from the point of view of Protestantism, but from a point of view which can appeal to the consciences of all men, irrespective of their particular faith, upon grounds which can be occupied by all men who love justice, freedom, and toleration."

He added that while he must acknowledge that there rested in the Government and in Parliament the power to interfere, he must still contend that that power should not be exercised until all the facts bearing upon the case had been investigated, and all means of conciliation exhausted, and he therefore moved that the bill be not then read a

second time, but that it be read a second time that day six months.[1] This was a bold position, bolder perhaps than the country had thought he could take, and it was as satisfactory to the great body of Liberals, as it was unwelcome to the Catholic bishops and the political champions of the dangerous policy of federal coercion.

The bishops were undoubtedly pledged to support the Remedial measure, and therefore bound to exert their episcopal influence in behalf of the Government. But some of the ecclesiastics, and particularly Archbishop Walsh of Ontario, like Archbishop Lynch in earlier times, maintained a discreet and moderate attitude, and exercised only the legitimate rights of citizenship in sympathetic effort to improve the position of the Catholic people of Manitoba. One of the most extraordinary utterances of the contest was that of Bishop Laflèche of Three Rivers. In the course of a sermon denouncing Mr. Laurier and the Liberals, he told the people that to vote for Liberal candidates would be a grievous sin. He quoted Mr. Laurier's declaration that he would take his stand upon public questions, "not from the point of view of Roman Catholicism, nor from the point of view of Protestantism, but from a point of view which would appeal to the consciences of all men, irrespective of their political faith, and upon grounds which could be occupied by all men who loved

[1] Hansard, March 3rd, 1896, pages 2,758, 2,759.

justice, freedom, and toleration," and he said: "There is the most categorical affirmation of the Liberalism condemned by the Church which has ever been made, to my knowledge, in a Legislative Assembly of our country. The man who speaks thus is a rationalist Liberal. He formulates a doctrine entirely opposed to the Catholic doctrine; that is to say, that a Catholic is not bound to be a Catholic in his public life. It is a fundamental error, which can lead to the most deplorable consequences."

The bishop quoted a Liberal member from Quebec who had said that while Mgr. Langevin had a perfect right to be satisfied with the Remedial Bill in its religious aspect, he as a French-Canadian had the right to his own opinion when it came to a discussion of the national and constitutional side of the question.[1] "There," said Bishop Laflèche, "is the Church set aside in a matter where the very rights of conscience are at stake. Here is a member who rises in face of the bishops and says to them squarely: 'You say that the bill is acceptable, but I say no.' Whom are we to believe? Who has jurisdiction to speak with authority? The Church, that is to say, the hierarchy. The member says it is he. Well, that is Liberalism, pure and simple; that Liberalism which, under pretext that a religious question touches politics on certain sides, forbids religious authority to interfere." He said further

[1] See speech of Mr. Monet, M.P. for Napierville, Hansard, March 12th, 1896, page 3,348.

that, "Under the circumstances, a Catholic cannot, under pain of sinning in a grave matter, vote for the chief of a party who has formulated so publicly such an error, and for his followers who support him in that error, so long as they will not have publicly disavowed that error and made a formal engagement to vote for a Remedial Bill accepted by the bishops." He counselled the people to lay aside all party feeling, and to judge men and events from the point of view of Catholic principles only and Catholic teaching only. "This," he concluded, "you will do courageously as Catholics, as Canadians and as citizens, and the good God will bless your efforts and will permit you to find here below a taste of the happiness which He reserves to His elect."

Many of the parish priests took advantage of such episcopal utterances to join in the contest, and throughout Quebec, as well as in some of the constituencies of the English-speaking provinces, it was held to be a grievous sin to vote for Liberal candidates. Mgr. Marois, Vicar-General, wrote from the Archbishopric of Quebec to the Rev. J. E. Rouleau, curé of St. Ubalde: "In reply to your letter asking if it is a mortal sin for anyone not to follow the direction given by their bishops in their collective *mandement* touching the settlement of the Manitoba question when his attention will have been drawn to the fact that this direction obliges in conscience, I am charged by Mgr. the Administrator, to tell you that it is a grave fault—

a mortal sin—not to follow the direction of the first pastors, and that the words which you quote from page 7 of the *mandement* signify exactly that it will be a grave and mortal fault to act thus, that is to say, not to obey the bishops. If anyone says to you, 'In spite of your reasoning I have more confidence in Mr. Laurier and I vote for his candidate,' that elector, unless he has lost common sense, will be guilty of grave and mortal fault. Good Catholics, faithful sons of the Church, will march in the way indicated by their bishops. Others would be rebellious sons and following the way of iniquity and of grave sin, which separates from God and delivers us to the powers of darkness."

A letter over the signature of Father Macdonald, parish priest of Alexandria, circulated in at least one of the counties of Ontario, said in part: "As some designing politicians have misrepresented the attitude of the Catholic clergy in the present election campaign, I am authorized by his Lordship Bishop Macdonell to say to you and all interested parties that he earnestly desires that all Catholics will vote for the Government candidate. He expects that his Catholic subjects, for the maintenance of the essentially Catholic principle of Separate Schools, will be Catholic and generous enough to rise superior to all party ties or political combinations in the present crisis;" and again, "He further authorized me to say that all the archbishops and bishops of Canada are united on this question,

and they all, without a single exception, desire their faithful to support Government candidates, because events have convinced the bishops that a redress of Catholic grievances in Manitoba can be expected from the present Government, and from it only."

It would be easy to multiply such literature. But these extraordinary deliverances sufficiently indicate the temper of the Catholic ecclesiastics and the desperate nature of the influences which many Liberal candidates had to encounter. On the other hand, an intense Protestant feeling was excited in many communities, the dying Protestant Protective Association with which Liberals could have no natural alliance, was revived, and the Orange Association, which in Canada at least is rarely dominated by mere sectarian bigotry, was exceedingly uneasy in its familiar political alliances. At a great political meeting in Toronto, influential leaders of the Conservative party united with men of conspicuous position in the Liberal party in determined resistance of the movement to interfere with the school legislation of Manitoba.[1] The Equal Rights League, of which Mr. D'Alton McCarthy was president, issued an address in which they said: "It seemed incredible that the free electors of any constituency in Ontario would, if they understood the policy of the Government, sanction its dealing with the Manitoba school question. At first the

[1] Meeting at Massey Hall, February 23rd, 1896.

party supporting it were inveigled into an unwilling approval of it by the artful pretence that the Administration were acting in a judicial capacity. But as in the later proceeding, the Government has had to throw off the mask and appear in its true character of coercionists who have bargained in a *concordat* made with the hierarchy of Quebec as the price of its support to restore the French half-breed system of Separate Schools in Manitoba, the defeat of that policy was assured if the Government were only boldly encountered." The manifesto goes on to say, "that it fell upon the little band who are connected with the League in the default made by the regular Opposition to seek for the honest verdict of the people of Canada on this question." It deals then with the contest in Haldimand where the ministerial candidate was successful, and with the bye-election in the Conservative constituency of Cardwell which was captured by a League candidate, and concludes from these events that at the approaching general election the people will put an end to, "that baneful ecclesiastical influence which has been the curse of Canada, and has done so much to divide its people and to retard the growth and proper development of our country, and to which both the old political parties have in times past succumbed." Another paragraph says, "It cannot be denied that the French-Canadian hierarchy seem to be straining their dictatorship to the breaking limit, and it is hoped that in the all-

important contest which is impending, the struggle will not be altogether sectarian nor conducted upon national or racial lines." The League finally declare that their motto is, "Hands off Manitoba—No coercion," and that "except where provided for in the British North America Act, there should be but one official language throughout Canada, and that the uncontrolled jurisdiction in the matter of education in the North-West and in the provinces to be created out of it should be left to the people of the Territories and of those provinces."

The Remedial Bill, in the meantime had failed of adoption in the House of Commons. The normal majority of the Government was fifty-three, but a majority of only eighteen was recorded for the measure on its second reading, and this included the votes of six Catholic Liberals. When the bill got into committee, a deliberate and resolute course of obstruction was entered upon by its opponents, and the circumstances were peculiarly favourable to the success of this policy. The Constitution fixes the duration of Parliament "for five years from the day of the return of the writs for choosing the House, and no longer," and under this provision Parliament would dissolve by effluxion of time on April 24th. The bill was introduced on February 11th, and the motion for the second reading made on March 3rd, and from that date until April 16th no other subject was discussed. The final sitting for

the consideration of the measure lasted from three o'clock on Monday until two o'clock on Thursday morning, and Sir Charles Tupper was then forced to announce that as only a single week of the life of Parliament remained, it was absolutely necessary to vote money for the urgent requirements of the public service, and to deal with other important measures. The more aggressive leaders of the obstructionists were the Hon. N. Clarke Wallace and the Hon. Joseph Martin, and their work was performed with unceasing vigilance, untiring energy, and bold employment of all the expedients of parliamentary controversy. Sir Charles Tupper had assumed the leadership of the House of Commons upon his election for Cape Breton, and the lion-hearted veteran of four-score years took upon his shoulders the brunt of the stern parliamentary fighting for the policy which he had inherited from the plunging and distracted Cabinet of Sir Mackenzie Bowell. He fought with amazing freshness and with indomitable courage. But the sands of the life of Parliament ran out all too swiftly, and the Opposition had him at their mercy. He could only yield, though with a stormy and menacing front, and carry his appeal to the country.

Parliament was prorogued on April 23rd, and Sir Charles Tupper proceeded at once to reorganize the Cabinet. Changes were made in half a dozen portfolios, but the reorganized Ministry embraced no new men of commanding influence, except,

perhaps, Mr. Angers, of Quebec, and Mr. Hugh John Macdonald, of Manitoba. Mr. Angers had an excellent reputation in Quebec, but his treatment of Mr. Mercier had raised against him bitter and powerful opponents, and he seems to have had small share of the art and craft of the practising politician. Mr. Macdonald was a son of the old Conservative leader, who had sat in Parliament for two or three sessions, and combined a distinct distaste for public life with all his father's genial and attractive personal qualities. Still one more effort was made to persuade Sir William Meredith to leave the bench and enter the federal Cabinet. But Sir Charles Tupper, with his very great powers of persuasion, was no more successful than Sir Mackenzie Bowell. It is hard, indeed, to see how Sir William Meredith, with his record in the politics of Ontario, could have accepted the remedial policy. It is not likely, however, that he even required to consider the situation from this standpoint. He had accepted a judicial office for which he had eminent qualifications, and seems to have been altogether disinclined to return to active politics. His political career was unsuccessful, as we count success, but there have been few more useful and honourable in our history, and it can hardly be questioned that if he had joined Sir Charles Tupper he would have sensibly improved the prospects of the Conservative party. Mr. B. B. Osler, Q.C., the leader of the jury bar in Ontario, was also invited

to enter the Cabinet as Minister of Justice. Mr. Osler was a nominal Liberal in politics, but for eight or ten years had maintained no active identification with the Liberal party. He felt, however, that if he entered the Cabinet, the fact would be treated as a desertion from the Liberals in the very teeth of the election, and that he would be exposed to suspicions against which he could offer no adequate justification. There were features of the general policy of the Conservative party which had his sympathy and support, but to federal interference with Manitoba he was resolutely opposed, and not even the promise of a material modification of that policy in case of his acceptance of office overcame his objection to the summary adoption of new political alliances, and the necessary antagonism to the Liberal leaders which this involved.

On the other hand, it was announced that Sir Oliver Mowat, who had held the Premiership of Ontario for more than twenty years, would accept a seat in the Liberal Cabinet in case Mr. Laurier succeeded in the elections, and his great reputation for prudence, sagacity, and integrity, materially strengthened the Liberal canvass. Mr. Fielding, the Liberal Premier of Nova Scotia, and Mr. Blair, the leader of the coalition Government of New Brunswick, also came out to lead the Liberal forces in their respective provinces, and altogether the Liberal party showed absolute unity and absolute devotion to the federal leader. During the few years

preceding the election, Mr. Laurier had visited every province of the Confederation, and had even devoted months to arduous campaigning in the far western communities. Everywhere a new national spirit was born into the Liberal party, and a genuine enthusiasm for the leader developed.

But it was a hard, stern, eventful, and even tumultuous contest. Sir Charles Tupper, with characteristic courage, opened his campaign at Winnipeg; and at the very seat of the Government which had enacted the school legislation, and in the very face of the people most concerned, maintained the expedience and justice of the remedial policy. He stumped the eastern provinces, and made a tremendous campaign in Ontario. His vigour and endurance were phenomenal. Now and then he had to face hostile meetings in Conservative strongholds, but his spirit never was daunted and his energy never abated. He touched the dormant party spirit of the old Macdonald legions, and measurably overcame even the divisive and destructive work of Mr. Clarke Wallace and Mr. D'Alton McCarthy. We could almost see the restoration of party unity proceed under his hand. It is the fortune of a leader who meets defeat to receive dispraise and ingratitude, and while it may be that with all his bold constructive genius, Sir Charles Tupper lacked the more persuasive qualities of leadership, this at least is true that no braver man ever led a party into battle, and no more gallant

fight was ever made to save a field than his in 1896. Mr. Laurier had never possessed such exceptional physical stamina as belonged to Sir Charles Tupper, and the unusual length and arduous character of the campaign tested his endurance to the utmost. But for six weeks his voice was hardly still, and everywhere his sympathetic eloquence, his candour and directness, his moderation of statement and abstention from all mischievous appeal to passion and prejudice, impressed the soberer elements of the community, and baffled the efforts of his opponents to stampede the business interests and shift the contest to grounds which provided surer footing for the Administration. In Quebec as in Ontario he held to an undeviating course upon the school question, and faced the menaces of the ecclesiastics and the envenomed assaults of their political agents in the courteous and respectful but still unyielding spirit which he had manifested on the floor of Parliament. While he would not bow to clerical dictation, he refused to utter a word which could excite the prejudices of other religious communions against that to which he belonged, and feed the sectarian fires which were burning all too fiercely.

The result of the polling was a decisive, if not an overwhelming victory for the Liberal party. In Ontario the Liberals carried forty-four out of ninety-two seats, while four seats were carried by Conservative opponents of the remedial policy, and three by Patrons of Industry in general sympathy

with the Liberal leaders. Nova Scotia elected eleven Liberals and nine Conservatives; New Brunswick five Liberals, eight Conservatives, and one Independent; and in Prince Edward Island three out of the five seats were carried by Liberal candidates. Manitoba, in whose behalf the battle against coercion was waged, returned a Conservative majority, but still elected Mr. D'Alton McCarthy and two Liberal representatives. The Territories and British Columbia gave seven out of ten seats to the Liberal party, while in Quebec, out of a total representation of sixty-five, only seventeen Conservatives secured election. To the Liberals of Quebec, maligned, misrepresented, and misunderstood from the very birth of Confederation, faithful through long years of adversity to the essential principles of civil and religious liberty, we owe the deliverance of Manitoba from the policy of federal coercion and the pacific settlement of a quarrel which threatened the integrity of Confederation and menaced the self-governing rights of all the western communities.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SCHOOL SETTLEMENT

HARDLY was the new federal Government well seated in office before negotiations were opened with the authorities of Manitoba for such amendment and modification of the provincial school legislation as would remove established grievances, and reconcile the Catholic ratepayers of the province to the Public School system. The provincial Ministers met Mr. Laurier in a cordial and conciliatory spirit, and a basis of compromise was arranged without difficulty. They held unflinchingly to the ground that no system of State-aided Separate Schools could receive recognition, and Mr. Laurier freely conceded that this was a demand which he was not entitled to prefer, and which indeed was not sanctioned by the judgment of the Privy Council. The agreement as finally reached, and as embodied in the statutes of Manitoba, provides that when authorized by a resolution passed by a majority of the trustees of the district in which the school is situated, or upon a petition presented to the trustees by the parents or guardians of ten children attending a rural school, or of twenty-five children attending a city, town or village school, there shall be religious teaching.

Such religious teaching shall take place between the hours of 3.30 and 4.00 o'clock in the afternoon, and shall be conducted by any Christian clergyman whose charge includes any portion of the school district, or by any person duly authorized by such clergyman, or by a teacher when so authorized. Where so specified by resolution or petition, religious teaching during the prescribed period shall take place only on certain specified days of the week, instead of on every teaching day. In schools in towns and cities where the average attendance of Roman Catholic children is forty or upwards, and in villages and rural districts where the average attendance of such children is twenty-five or upwards, the trustees shall, if required by the parents or guardians of such number of Roman Catholic children respectively, employ at least one duly certificated Roman Catholic teacher; and similarly in towns and cities where the average attendance of non-Roman Catholic children is forty or upwards, and in villages and rural districts where the attendance of such children is twenty-five or upwards, a non-Roman Catholic teacher shall be employed. Where the school-room accommodation does not permit of the pupils being placed in separate rooms for the purpose of religious teaching, provision is made by the regulations of the Department of Education whereby the time allotted for religious teaching is divided in such a way that the religious teaching of Roman Catholic children is carried on

during the prescribed time on one half of the teaching days of each month, and of non-Roman Catholic children during an equal period. During the secular school work, no separation of children by religious denominations is allowed. Where the school accommodation permits, the pupils may be placed in separate rooms for religious teaching. Children whose parents do not desire their attendance upon religious exercises must remain in another room, or be dismissed before such exercises are begun. Where ten of the pupils in any school speak the French language, or any language other than English as their native language, the teaching must be conducted in French or such other language, and English upon the bi-lingual system.[1] These are substantially the propositions rejected by the federal commissioners who negotiated with the Manitoba Government while the Remedial Bill was before the House of Commons.

In the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Manitoba Legislature on February 18th, 1897, the Lieutenant-Governor thus referred to the settlement: "Since the last session of this Legislature the question of whether the Public School system of this province should be superseded by federal legislation, and the system existing before the passing of the Act of 1890 be reimposed upon the province, has been settled by an harmonious conference between the federal Ministers and my advisers. The

[1] Manitoba Statutes, 60 Vic. Chap. 26.

terms of the settlement have already been made public, and a bill to amend the school law in accordance therewith will immediately be laid before you. The law as amended will be administered by my Government in a spirit of conciliation, and with a desire to make the provisions effective in extending the benefits of our educational system to every class in the community."

The announcement of the terms of settlement was well received by the country. There was no serious attack from Conservative journals, while Mr. E. F. Clarke, Conservative member for West Toronto, who had condemned the remedial policy in his election canvass, and Mr. John Ross Robertson, who had carried East Toronto as an independent protectionist and a strenuous opponent of federal intervention in Manitoba, substantially accepted the settlement as a fair solution of a disturbing and complicated question.[1] The arrangement was also cordially sanctioned by Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, by eminent Protestant divines, and by

[1] In their address to the electors of West Toronto, Mr. E. F. Clarke and Mr. E. B. Osler, the Conservative candidates, said: "We do not approve of the proposed remedial legislation as a means of settling the Manitoba school difficulty. We believe rather that the settlement should be left entirely with the people of Manitoba themselves, who are the best judges of the educational requirements of the Prairie Province. We have the most abiding faith in the sense of fair play and justice of the majority, and we feel assured that if any real grievance can be shown to exist in the present school laws, it will be speedily removed by the Manitoba Legislature. Holding these views we shall actively resist and vote against any attempt to pass remedial legislation or to coerce the people of our sister province."

the Hon. Edward Blake, who had acted as chief counsel for the Catholic minority before the Privy Council. Mr. Blake said that if, in order to succeed in the appeal, he had found it necessary to maintain that the Separate School system should be absolutely restored, he would have failed, and that it was only by taking much more limited ground that he had induced the court to touch the question at all. The judicial committee had simply decided that the Governor-General-in-Council had jurisdiction in the matter, and had left to the political authority the question of how the jurisdiction should be exercised. He considered the terms of the settlement more advantageous to the Catholic minority than any Remedial Bill which it was in the power of the Parliament of Canada to force on the Province of Manitoba.[1]

But the settlement was received with bitter protest and with uncompromising hostility by the Catholic ecclesiastics. During a provincial election contest in St. Boniface, Archbishop Langevin delivered a sermon in which he told his people: "I am a bishop. I speak with authority, and I tell you, you cannot in conscience vote for a partisan of the so-called settlement, or for a candidate who proposes to try it, or who supports leaders of a party declaring in favour of the settlement. Now, you are to do as seems good to you. You are free from the

[1] Letter from the Hon. Edward Blake to the Hon. Chas. Fitzpatrick, January 20th, 1897. (Toronto *Globe*, February 16th, 1897).

point of physical liberty. You are free to adhere to the Church or to separate from it. If you want godless schools separate from it." "But," he continued: "I have spoken as a bishop. You are free, but I cannot free you from the obligations of your consciences. You are free to separate from the Pope and the bishops. You are free to prefer other chiefs, but, know it well, that we also are free to defend the outraged Church and the threatened souls of children. You are free to remain with the family. But if you abandon it you will not sit at the family banquet. If you estrange yourselves like prodigals, do not ask your share of the inheritance. . . . I repeat, you cannot in conscience vote for a partisan of the so-called settlement, or a candidate who proposes to try it, or who supports the leader of a party declaring in favour of the settlement."

Bishop Gravel, of Nicolet, Quebec, sent out a *mandement*, in which he said: "You know that Mgr. Langevin could not possibly accept the schools that they want to give to the Catholics of his diocese. It is said in the proposed law that all the schools of Manitoba will be neutral; that it will be forbidden to speak of religion to the children except after school hours, and if the scholars will remain, if the school commissioners and the taxpayers consent thereto, and if the curé is able to go himself or send some one in his stead, to teach catechism for a half hour after class. These are difficult conditions to unite, and it would only result, even if it were

practicable, in making the Catholic children take a dislike to religion because they would be obliged to be at catechism while their young Protestant companions were at play." Archbishop Begin, of Quebec, issued a letter to be read from the pulpits in terms quite as uncompromising. He said: "No bishop wants nor can approve the so-called settlement of the Manitoba School question, which definitely rests only upon the unjustifiable abandonment of the best established and most sacred rights of the Catholic minority. Mgr. Langevin's energetic protest against this settlement was in full accordance with the direction of the Holy Father. This is not the time to examine this settlement in its various articles, but what I have already said and written is sufficient for you to conclude that I absolutely disapprove of it. In his encyclical to the French nation, Leo XIII said: 'But the Church, the guardian and safeguard of the integrity of the faith bequeathed her by the authority of God, the foundator, shall call all the nations to a Christian wisdom, and also see by what precepts and institutions we cultivate the youth who shall not be formed in mixed and neutral schools that the Church has always openly condemned, and the Church shall warn the fathers of families to watch the eminent danger for the soul in this moment.' Following the example set by other bishops of the Dominion, with a view to come to the aid of our brethren of Manitoba until justice is rendered to

them, I ask five dollars from each curate, two dollars from each poor missionary, *vicary*, and college professor, and ten dollars from each religious community. This money shall be sent to me before Lent."

In the course of a sermon preached at New Richmond, Quebec, Father Charlevoix said: "Your duty is clear before you. You have to choose between the commands of your bishops and the misrepresentations of their enemies. You have to choose between Christ and Satan. If you despise Christ by disobeying the bishops, you must suffer as the consequences of such action the retribution that is sure to follow." On the last Sunday of 1896, a *mandement* was read from every altar in the archdiocese of Quebec banning *L'Electeur*, the chief Liberal journal of the Quebec district. The reasons advanced for this extreme action were that *L'Electeur* had repeatedly questioned the authority of the episcopate to interfere in public matters, and had ignored all remonstrances and censures. Its course upon the Manitoba school question was pronounced particularly objectionable, and was held to constitute a denial of the authority of the bishops to determine the nature, mode, and sufficiency of the education to be imparted to the Catholic children of Manitoba. The exact words in which the paper was condemned were as follows: "Invoking the holy name of God, and using the powers formally included in our episcopal jurisdiction by the tenth rule of the

Index published by order of the Council of Trent, we, archbishop and bishops of the ecclesiastical Province of Quebec, forbid formally, under penalty of grievous sin and refusal of sacraments, anyone reading the newspaper *L'Electeur*, subscribing to it, contributing to it, selling it, encouraging it in any manner whatever. This prohibition shall extend to all ecclesiastics without exception. And because in this condemnation we do embrace not only the title of *L'Electeur*, but more especially the pernicious doctrines which that newspaper spreads among the people, we adjure the faithful at the same time to cease receiving any newspaper which would dare publish the same unsound ideas and manifest the same tendency of insubordination to the religious authorities."

The blow was infinitely damaging, but the paper, revived under the name *Le Soleil*, is still widely circulated in the Quebec district, and still vigorously champions the Liberal teachings of Mr. Laurier. In Bonaventure a bye-election for the House of Commons became necessary, and M. Guite took the field as the Liberal candidate. The Bishop of Rimouski thereupon demanded that he should sign the following document: "The Laurier-Greenway settlement of the Catholic schools of Manitoba, having been adjudged unacceptable by the authority of the bishops, I do solemnly pledge myself, on my faith and honour, to vote in the House without any restriction whatever, if I am

elected a member, against this settlement or any other settlement which would not have been accepted by the same religious authority according to the terms of the Constitution and of the judgment of the Privy Council of Her Majesty. As an obedient son of the Church, I also pledge myself absolutely to forbid all those who shall represent me in the present electoral campaign, either on the hustings or in their private conversation with the electors, to speak one single word in favour of the Laurier-Greenway settlement, or of giving it a trial, because the same has not been accepted by the religious authority." M. Guite bravely withstood the demand. He said he would be glad if his co-religionists in Manitoba could receive even more liberal treatment, but that neither before God nor before his conscience could he renounce the liberty of exercising his franchise to the best of his judgment.

If we remember the rigid and absolute character of Catholic teaching, if we consider how the ancient Church is rooted in the reverence and affection of her children, if we reflect that many of the communities of Quebec are wholly French and Catholic, and recognize the almost divine diligence of the spiritual teachers in the ministrations of comfort and mercy, we can perhaps partly understand how sorely and sadly many Catholic Liberals faced this hard battle for the principles of free Government, and what splendid courage was needed to maintain

the unwelcome conflict. We feel a sense of the strain and the soreness of the battle in a speech which Mr. Laurier delivered before the Club National, of Montreal, on December 30th, 1896, and on an occasion which was remarkable for the presence of Mr. Greenway, under whose administration the Manitoba school legislation was enacted. The Prime Minister there said: "I have devoted my career to the realization of an idea. I have taken the work of Confederation where I found it when I entered political life, and determined to give to it my life, and nothing will deter me from continuing to the end in my task to preserve at all price our civil liberty. Nothing will prevent me from continuing my efforts to preserve that state of society conquered by our fathers at the price of so many years and so much blood. It may be that the result of my efforts will be the Tarpeian Rock, but if that be the case I will fall without murmur or recrimination or complaint, certain that from my tomb will rise the immortal idea for which I have always fought." And there is surely a spirit of rare and high nobility in these words which he particularly addressed to the Young Liberals of the National Club: "Let me give a word of good counsel. During your career you will have to suffer many things which will appear to you as supreme injustice. Let me say to you that you should never allow your religious convictions to be affected by anything which appears to you an injustice. Let

me ask you never to allow your religious convictions to be affected by the acts of men. Your convictions are immortal. Your convictions are not only immortal, but their base is eternal. Let your convictions be always calm, serene, and superior to the inevitable trials of life, and show to the world that Catholicism is compatible with the exercise of liberty in its highest acceptation."

The school settlement was the subject of frequent inquiry and criticism in the House of Commons in the session of 1897, but no formal resolution of censure was offered, or, in fact, ever has been offered upon Mr. Laurier's disposition of the subject. No one with authority and responsibility in public life has thought that it would be the part of prudence or of patriotism to revive the policy of the Remedial Order, or that the interests of the Catholic people of Manitoba would be well served by any further attempt at federal intervention. In the debate on the address in 1897, Sir Charles Tupper thus pronounced upon the settlement: "A settlement that does not give substantial justice, that does not meet the case, in my judgment ought not to be dignified by the name of a settlement. It may be forced upon the minority, they may be weak, they may be unable to resist, and a variety of causes may be brought into operation that will prevent them from obtaining their rights. But I am now speaking upon the position of the question in the abstract. My predecessor, Sir Mackenzie Bowell,

when this judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was given, felt bound to bring forward a measure that was, in his judgment, calculated to carry out what the law and the Constitution of the country demanded, as declared by the highest tribunal of the Empire. I need not remind the House that, as representing the Government in this branch of the Legislature, I submitted a bill for that purpose. I need not remind the House that there was no effort that I could make that was not made, that I put forth the most strenuous efforts possible, not only on the floor of this House, but with members of the party, individually as well as collectively, for the purpose of carrying that measure to a successful conclusion. . . . When I was called upon to form an Administration, believing as I did, whether rightly or wrongly, according to the best light and information I possessed, that a wrong had been done to the minority of Manitoba, and the Government of the country were bound to right that wrong in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, I went boldly to the country, and, notwithstanding the great cleavage—that great division in the party with which I had the honour to be connected,—notwithstanding all the clamour, and agitation, and prejudice that were excited throughout the country on this question, in the faithful discharge of what I conceived to be my duty, I went forward and staked the existence of my Government upon that measure." He concluded,

however, that he was not bound to pursue the contest, and that the policy of federal intervention had ceased to be an essential feature of the programme of the Conservative party.[1]

The Prime Minister, in reply, thus defended the settlement and declared his position: "When we came into power, we approached that question in the only way in which it should have been approached, and if it had been approached in that way first, this country would have been spared the years of agitation, which have brought it almost to the verge of civil war. We went to the Government of Manitoba, and said to them: 'The legislation of 1890 has inflicted a grievance upon the minority of Manitoba. You have the authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council that such is the case. Repair the grievance yourselves.' Sir, they undertook themselves to repair that grievance. We thought, and still think—and upon that issue I am ready at any time to take the verdict of the country—that the smallest measure of conciliation was far preferable to any measure of coercion. The honourable gentleman says that we obtained no concessions for the minority; he argued no less than forty minutes to prove that we obtained no restoration to the minority of the rights which they had enjoyed before. I care not what he says about that, in view of what he said immediately afterwards. He insisted that we had obtained no restoration of

[1] Hansard, March 26th, 1897, pages 38-39.

any rights which had been enjoyed by the minority, but in the next breath he says that we have obtained new rights for the minority. I care not whether we obtained a restoration of old rights or a concession of new rights; the only thing I care for is that, whereas, under the Act of 1890, they had not the privilege of teaching their own religion in the schools, by the concessions which have been made, whether they are a concession of new rights or a restoration of old rights, they will have the right hereafter of teaching their own religion in the Province of Manitoba. . . . The position I took upon this question, I took on the floor of this Parliament, I took it in the Province of Ontario, I took it in the Province of Quebec, I maintained it everywhere, and it was this: that though the Constitution of this country gave to this Parliament and to this Government the right and power of interference with the school legislation of Manitoba, it was an extreme right, a reserved power, to be exercised only when all other means have been exhausted. Well, the moment I found that the people of Manitoba were ready to make concessions which practically restored to the Catholics the right of teaching the French language and of teaching their own religion in the schools, I submitted to my fellow-countrymen in the Province of Quebec that it was far better to obtain those concessions by negotiation than to endeavour to obtain them by means of coercion. . . . I venture at this moment to

say that there is not a man in the Province of Quebec, there is not a man in this country, who, looking at the settlement, unbiassed, and unprejudiced, will not come to the conclusion that it was a happy solution of a very difficult situation indeed. I am perfectly aware—why should I disguise to myself a thing which stares us in the face?—I know very well that the settlement we have effected is not acceptable to certain high dignitaries in the Church to which I belong. But I have every reason to believe—nay, as day after day passes it becomes more evident—that as the facts are better understood, the conviction will take possession of every breast in this country that if we are ever to make a nation of Canada, if we are ever to solve successfully any of these difficulties that may arise, we can only solve them in the way expressed in the Speech from the Throne, by mutual concession and reciprocal good will. I might say more—I am quite free to say more. I may say that this settlement is not as advantageous as I desired myself, but I have no hesitation in saying that though it is not as advantageous as I would have desired myself, still, after six long years of agitation, when the passions of men had been aroused to the highest pitch, it was not possible to obtain more, nor for the Government of Manitoba to concede more, under present circumstances."[1]

But while the settlement was not disturbed in

[1] Hansard, March 26th, 1897, pages 64-65.

Parliament, the Liberal party had still to overcome the desperate determination of the bishops to continue the quarrel and to accomplish the political destruction of the authors of the compromise. As a last resort a group of Catholic Liberals appealed to Rome, and Monseigneur Merry del Val was sent out to inquire into the state of the Canadian Church and to consider the policy of the bishops. This has been represented as a recognition of the supremacy of the Pope in the political affairs of Canada. As a matter of fact, it was a proper appeal by members of the Catholic Communion to the head of their Church against the intolerant action of their spiritual superiors and the Pope's vicars. No episcopal decree was ever issued as a result of Mgr. Merry del Val's discreet and sagacious inquiries, but the denunciations of the bishops ceased, and their political energy was restrained. Later, a permanent papal legate was established in Canada, as in the United States, and Liberal Catholics have been permitted to repose in peace in the bosom of their Church, and there has been a welcome abatement of clerical activity in political contests. By the end of 1900, every Catholic school in the rural districts of Manitoba had accepted the provisions of the school settlement; and while it has been more difficult to arrange satisfactory terms for merging the Catholic schools of Winnipeg into the Public School system, negotiations are in progress which promise a harmonious solution, and the final extinguishment of

all the substantial grievances of the Catholic people. It is manifest that in Manitoba as in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Roman Catholics may enjoy full recognition of conscientious convictions under a Public School system, and practical control of the schools where they constitute the mass of the population.[1]

It but remains to add that during the general election of 1900, the attitude of the bishops of Quebec was without fault and beyond criticism. The struggle for a free voice and a free vote was won in 1896, and the name of Wilfrid Laurier must be forever associated with the long contest and the final victory. Best of all, the devotion of the French Canadian people to their Church stands unimpaired. There is no lessened acceptance of its beneficent faiths, there has no virtue departed from its ancient forms and ceremonies; the priest of God has authority undiminished in the realm of conduct and morals, while political freedom comports with the dignity and independence of the citizen, fulfils

[1] Interesting pamphlets bearing on the school question are: "The Manitoba School Question," by F. C. Wade, of Winnipeg; a Reply to Mr. Wade's pamphlet by John S. Ewart, Q.C.; "The Remedial Bill, from the Point of View of a Catholic Member," by Senator L. G. Power, of Halifax; "The Manitoba School Question, a Series of Four Open Letters," by James Fisher, M.P.P., of Manitoba; "Is Manitoba Right? A Question of Ethics, Politics, Facts, and Law," by A. B. Bethune, of Winnipeg; "The Manitoba School Case, 1894," edited for the Canadian Government by the appellant's solicitors in London; and "The Canadian Clergy, Their Mission and Their Work," by L. O. David, of Montreal.

the requirements of the Constitution, and conserves national stability. It is well, also, to remember that Mgr. Conroy, Mgr. Merry del Val, and Mgr. Falconio, successive delegates from the Papal Court, have passed condemnation upon the intolerant policy of the Quebec hierarchy, and upheld the rights of Canadian Catholics to all the constitutional privileges of British citizens.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PREFERENTIAL TARIFF

IT has been shown that in the speech which Mr. Laurier made at Somerset in 1887 when he pronounced against commercial union with the United States as a practicable Canadian policy, he intimated his preference for a commercial alliance between Great Britain and the British Colonies over a Zollverein with the American Republic. When he came to Toronto in 1889 to defend the course of the Liberal party against federal disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act, he declared again that he would favour a closer commercial alliance between Canada and Great Britain. He insisted, however, that no such alliance could be formed except upon the basis of free trade, and that in view of the large revenues which Canada must collect we were bound to maintain a revenue tariff. He therefore for the time-being rejected commercial union with Great Britain as something which could not be obtained, and argued for a wide reciprocity with the United States as a possible policy under which very material benefits must accrue to the Canadian people.

This was probably the view at the moment of the great mass of Canadians, while there were

unquestionably sharp and distinct differences of opinion as to what measure of reciprocity Canada, with a due respect for her national integrity and a due regard for established interests, could afford to accept. It would be idle to deny that the resolutions adopted at the National Liberal Convention in 1893 modified, or at least more clearly defined, the trade policy of the party, and better expressed the dominant feeling of Liberals towards the United States and the Mother Country. These resolutions declared that the tariff should be so adjusted as to make free, or bear as lightly as possible upon, the necessaries of life, and should be so arranged as to promote freer trade with the whole world, and more particularly with Great Britain and the United States. They attacked the principle of protection as radically unsound, and unjust to the masses of the people, and declared for a fiscal policy, which while not doing injustice to any class, would promote foreign and domestic trade and afford substantial relief from the burdens under which the country laboured.

The time was peculiarly opportune for the advocacy of tariff reform in Canada. Mr. Cleveland had just achieved his great victory over the organized protectionists of the United States. The campaign of the Democrats had considerably influenced opinion in Canada. Even Sir John Thompson admitted imperfections in the Canadian tariff, and declared that mouldering branches must be lopped

away; while the Government instituted a series of tariff hearings with a view to adjustment and modification of existing duties.[1] The position of Liberals was also measurably affected by their practical alliance for the campaign of 1896 with Mr. D'Alton McCarthy aud the Patrons of Industry. Mr. McCarthy, from a staunch protectionist, had become an aggressive tariff reformer and a vigorous apostle of the teaching of the orthodox economists. The Patrons were an off-shoot from the farmers' organizations of the United States, and their demands embraced simplification of the laws and machinery of government, limitation of public subsidies, protection against industrial combinations, and a tariff for revenue.

The platform of the Equal Rights League, of which Mr. McCarthy was president, demanded that the tariff should be made less burdensome to the consuming masses; should be lowered just so far as was consistent with a due regard to the financial requirements of the country; and that a preference should be given in Canadian markets to Great Britain, and a like privilege extended to other countries that would deal with Canada on terms of fair trade. "This," they said, "involves what is known as a maximum and a minimum tariff, now common in some of the continental states of Europe, minimum to England and to our colonial

[1] Speech of Sir John Thompson, at the banquet of the Toronto Board of Trade, January 5th, 1893.

brethren who reciprocate with us, and to those foreign countries who are willing to trade on fair terms; maximum to such countries as the United States, who impose an excessive, and in some cases almost prohibitive duty against our products, so long as that attitude is maintained." The Patron platform declared in specific terms for a revenue tariff so adjusted as to fall upon the luxuries rather than the necessaries of life, for reciprocal trade under fair and equitable conditions between Canada and other countries, and for the free admission into Canada of cotton, tweeds, woollens, workmen's tools, farm implements, fence wire, binder twine, coal oil, iron and corn. The Conservative party squarely antagonized these various propositions, adhered to the principle of protection, and argued for a preferential tariff arrangement with Great Britain.

During the parliamentary session of 1892 we had the first distinct presentation of the tariff policy which the Laurier Government finally adopted. Mr. McNeill of North Bruce then submitted a resolution affirming that if and when the Parliament of Great Britain should admit Canadian products to the markets of the United Kingdom upon more favourable terms than it accords to the products of foreign countries, the Parliament of Canada would be prepared to accord corresponding advantages by a substantial reduction in the duties upon British manufactured goods.[1] The resolution was met by

[1] Hansard, April 25th, 1892, page 1,555.

the Liberal Opposition with an amendment to the effect that as Great Britain admitted the products of Canada into her ports free of duty, the scale of Canadian duties exacted on goods mainly imported from Great Britain should be reduced.[1] This was a tactical move of some advantage to the Liberal party, and in subsequent discussions was distinctly embarrassing to the Administration. The Conservative party, however, stood firmly by the system of protection, and based many of their arguments for a preferential tariff on the failure of free trade in Great Britain and the necessity for British duties against foreign countries in order to hold her own markets and survive the competition of the industries of Germany and the United States. The Government, in fact, trusted to the strength of protectionist sentiment to overcome the disintegrating effects within the Conservative party of the agitation against interference with the school legislation of Manitoba, and it became therefore the chief object of their campaign to unite the business interests of the country in defence of existing conditions. The Liberal platform and the speeches of the Liberal leaders were interpreted as declarations for summary and absolute free trade, and the consequent destruction of Canadian industry and ruin of Canadian manufacturers was persistently and strenuously predicted.

The Liberal leaders could not ignore these repre-

[1] Hansard, April 25th, 1892, page 1,623.

sentations. It was necessary to give assurances that no revolutionary proceeding was contemplated, and that a revenue tariff by no means involved the immediate and complete abolition of all customs duties. In a speech at Montreal, as, in fact, on many other occasions, Mr. Laurier dealt with these charges, and showed that in order to meet the demands of revenue a high scale of customs taxes must be maintained, and that in moving towards free trade progress must be slow, gradual, careful, and deliberate. On June 2nd, in the heat of the electoral canvass, he addressed a letter to Mr. George H. Bertram, of Toronto, in which we have a definite statement of his policy and purpose. "The intention of the Liberal party," he said, "is not and never was to establish absolute free trade in this country. The question was discussed at Ottawa, but, after anxious consideration, while fully recognizing the superiority of the British system of freedom of trade as an abstract principle, the convention came to the conclusion that, under the existing conditions of our country, the fiscal policy best adapted to its requirements, its economic situation, its enormous financial obligations, is a revenue tariff; that is to say, a tariff levying our revenue from custom duties, the basis of which would be the amount necessary to carry on the business of the country." He said further: "I submit also that, apart from the community as a whole, the manufacturers have not only nothing to suffer

but much to gain from the substitution of a revenue tariff for the present system. A revenue tariff being based upon the fixed charges of the country, and not, therefore, subject to fluctuations and alterations made to suit and please now one interest and now another, would establish these conditions of stability and permanency, which, experience has shown, are essential to the security and prosperity of the manufacturing interests. Moreover, I think I can confidently appeal to the experience of the business community that, with the exception of monopolies and combines, all manufacturing interests would welcome a change of policy on the lines I have indicated." He concurred, he said, with Mr. Bertram in the hope and belief "that the advent of the Liberal party to power would place political parties in Canada in the same position as political parties in England who have no tariff issue distracting the country every election."

These and like statements by other Liberal leaders, by the Liberal press and by individual Liberal candidates, somewhat steadied opinion among manufacturers, traders, and bankers; and while the more rigid protectionists naturally adhered to the Government, and were characteristically active in support of Conservative candidates, there was less of the unaffected alarm and incipient panic which other contests had excited. In fact the school question rather than the trade policy of the Liberal party was the dominant issue of the campaign; and

all that can be said is that probably many electors voted for Conservative candidates who would have refused to go to the polls, or would have cast their ballots against the remedial policy, if the question of protection could have been eliminated.

The question of preferential trade with Great Britain had been long discussed by such Canadian publicists as Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, Col. Geo. T. Denison, Dr. Geo. R. Parkin, and Principal Grant of Queen's University. Within the Conservative as within the Liberal party there was a growing sympathy for the proposition. The idea had lately received distinct recognition and encouragement from Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary in the Salisbury Cabinet, and perhaps the most forceful personality in British politics. It seemed impossible that Canadian protectionists could accept the basis of preferential trade laid down by Mr. Chamberlain. Nevertheless the Conservative press and Conservative speakers maintained an active advocacy of the project, and it is, perhaps, not uncharitable to think that their object was to put the loyalty of Liberals to the Empire under suspicion, and rouse the British sentiment which found expression when commercial union with the United States was under consideration. But, however this may be, the question was projected into the contest, and Mr. Laurier found it necessary to consider the attacks of his opponents and to declare his views on the subject. Mr. Chamberlain had said in substance

that the principle which must be accepted if we are to make even the slightest progress towards preferential trade, is that within the different parts of the Empire protection must disappear, and that the duties must be revenue duties and not protective duties in the sense of protecting the products of one part of the Empire against those of another part.[1] Mr. Laurier was able to argue from this and other utterances of British statesmen and British journals, that lower duties must be substituted for existing protectionist imposts as an essential step in any advance towards a preferential trading arrangement with Great Britain.

In a speech delivered at London on June 3rd, 1896, Mr. Laurier said: "Now the statesmen of Great Britain have thought that the colonies have come to a time when a new step must be taken in their development. What is that? That there shall be a commercial agreement between England and the colonies. That practical statesman, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, has come to the conclusion that the time has come when it is possible to have within the bounds of the Empire a new step taken, which will give to the colonies, in England, a preference for their products over the products of other nations. What would be the possibilities of such a step if it were taken? We sell our goods in England, we sell our wheat, our

[1] Speech at the dinner of the Canadian Club in London, March 25th, 1896.

butter, our cheese, all our natural products, but these have to compete with similar products from the United States, from Russia, and from other nations. Just see what a great advantage it would be to Canada if the wheat, cheese, and butter which we send to England should be met in England with a preference over similar products of other nations. The possibilities are immense. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the new and progressive Secretary of the Colonies, has declared that the time has come when it is possible to discuss the question. But, sir, if England is going to give us that preference, England would expect something from us in return. What is it she would expect? England would expect that we would come as closely to her own system of free trade, such as she has it, as it is possible for us to come. England does not expect that we would take her own system of free trade, such as she has it, but I lay it before you that the thing the English people would expect in return is that instead of the principle of protection, we should adopt the revenue form of tariff, pure and simple." It will be shown later that Mr. Chamberlain held that even revenue duties on British manufactures were fatal to the consummation of a British Zollverein.

These then were the trade issues which entered into the contest of 1896, and this the position of the controversy when the Liberal party came into office in Canada. There was undoubtedly uneasiness

among manufacturers and some fear among all classes who were concerned in industrial operations and interested in financial and banking institutions that revolutionary tariff legislation would be introduced, investments prejudiced or destroyed, the business of the country thrown into confusion, labour displaced, and commerce embarrassed and depressed. It is the work of a day to create a protectionist system. It is a delicate and difficult undertaking to scale down duties, and establish freer trade conditions without doing damage and injustice to industries which have been created by tariff legislation. The Liberal Ministers were bound in unmistakable pledges to proceed with caution and with deliberation, and they thoroughly understood that violent and inconsiderate action would create commercial instability and panic, revive protectionist sentiment, and discredit the cause of tariff reform. They therefore instituted a tariff commission, which met the manufacturers, traders, and producers at various centres throughout the country. The commissioners gave earnest and sympathetic consideration to all reasonable representations, and in the main, the protected interests presented their arguments in cordial, candid, and straightforward fashion. They took it for granted that while the Ministers were most concerned to promote the welfare of the masses of the people, they would prefer to benefit rather than to injure established industries, and that enterprise would be

recognized and investments protected in so far as the interests of capital and labour and the stability of the commercial fabric demanded. These tariff hearings did much to restore public confidence, and to prepare the country for a progressive but safe and moderate measure of tariff adjustment.

On April 25th, 1897, the new tariff was brought down in Parliament, and it is not exaggeration to say that no fiscal measure of more far-reaching significance was ever framed by a Canadian Ministry. It gave substantial relief to consumers and producers. It was a bold step in Imperial unity. It introduced the principle of minimum and maximum tariffs, and practically adopted the Davies resolution of 1892 in favour of preferential treatment of British products. In brief, the iron and steel duties were reduced from $1.50 to $1.00 a ton, and the bounty increased by $1.00 a ton. The taxes on barb wire and binder twine were abolished. Corn was placed on the free list. The flour duty was reduced. There was a reduction equal to 22 per cent. of the duties on refined sugar. Duties on the raw material of many farm necessaries were reduced. The tax on uncleaned rice was increased, as were also the taxes on liquor and tobacco. There was a general substitution of *ad valorem* for specific duties, and this also involved substantial reduction of imposts. The classifications were reduced and simplified. Provision was made that the duties on goods produced under trusts and combinations

could be summarily reduced or abolished. There was also, as the distinguishing feature of the measure, an immediate reduction of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on British goods, and provision for a further reduction to 25 per cent. on July 1st, 1898. In a few cases, particularly in cottons, the duties were increased, but this seemed to be necessary in order to give fair scope for the reduction of 25 per cent. on goods admitted under the special tariff. This special tariff was not, as then framed, a direct discrimination in favour of Great Britain. The German and Belgian treaties, which will be discussed later, disabled Canada from such direct discrimination in favour of the Mother Country. It was therefore provided that the minimum tariff should apply to any country which admitted the goods of Canada at rates as low or lower than were prescribed by the special schedules. This limited the application of the special tariff to Great Britain and New South Wales, and providing Canada could secure relief from British favoured nation treaties, accomplished the purpose of the Canadian Government. It is convenient to say now that in 1898 West India sugar was admitted into Canada at the lower rate of taxation, and that in 1900 the duties on British goods were further reduced from 25 per cent. to $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. below the figures of the general tariff.

The country received the general provisions of the new tariff with marked favour and the British

preference with positive enthusiasm. The Conservative attack was directed against the constitutional aspects of the measure rather than against its readjustments of the scale of taxation. It is true that at the moment it was denounced as a deadly blow at important Canadian industries.[1] But when it was found that trade prospered, industries flourished, and new life was infused into all the channels of Canadian commerce, ground was shifted, and it was thought better to describe the new fiscal policy as a practical ratification of the old protectionist system. In fact, the measure has never been subjected to any consistent line of attack. It is sometimes denounced as unduly favourable to the United States, sometimes as calculated in its practical operation to crush out Canadian industries in order to facilitate British imports, sometimes as unmitigated protection. There is no doubt that the principle of protection still remains in the tariff, and that a measure of advantage is undoubtedly retained for Canadian manufacturers and producers. This is inevitable under any tariff designed to raise the revenues necessary to the financial needs of the country, and is perhaps essential to the growth and stability of commercial and manufacturing operations in Canada in face of the American method of slaughtering goods in outside markets and the lower freight rates enjoyed by many

[1] See the speech of Sir Charles Tupper in the House of Commons, April 26th, 1897, page 1,291.

American exporters as against the charges exacted by Canadian railways for the carriage of Canadian products. Great distances and a small population compel some of these inequalities, and twenty years of extreme protection necessarily brought into existence many industries which could not meet low tariff conditions, and could not be summarily subjected to the free and unobstructed competition of British and foreign manufacturers. Practical statesmen must deal in a practical way with existing conditions, and aside from considerations of prudence and equity, the leaders of the Liberal party were doubly pledged against rash and revolutionary legislation.

But it is vain to argue that the Fielding tariff was not a substantial measure of reform. The special tariff on British goods materially encouraged and cheapened importations from Britain, and many of the duties on farm supplies and household necessaries were lowered, to the advantage alike of the consumers and the revenue. In fact, if the British preference had not been introduced as the essential feature of the tariff, it would probably have been attacked as a relentless free trade measure, and have evoked the strenuous and enduring hostility of the protectionist classes. No better defence of the Fielding tariff from the standpoint of the Government need be offered than that of Lord Farrer, who was for very many years the leader of the old free trade guard in

England. Lord Farrer said: "No reasonable free trader wishes to see a system of protection which has been in force for many years, and under which industries of various kinds have grown up, abolished at a single blow. Such a step would be both unjust and unwise. What free traders desire is a much more moderate and a safer course. They wish to see the colonies abandon protection as a theory, and gradually reduce the most obnoxious of their present protective duties. This would probably, by increasing importation itself, increase revenue and make further reduction possible. Gradually the colonies would thus approach, and ultimately attain the state of things which obtains in the United Kingdom without undue sacrifice of revenue, and without injustice to existing interests. But it is out of the question to do this except cautiously and by degrees, as, indeed it was done in this country. This is what we may hope for under the new régime in Canada. . . . The value of Mr. Laurier's proposal is that it makes no retrograde step, and violates no free trade principles. So far as Canada is concerned, it is not complete free trade, but it is a step from protection towards free trade—just the same kind of step as we made ourselves in the old Huskisson days, when we approached free trade by the way of reciprocity. At the present moment it would be a step backward if taken by the Mother Country; it is a step forward when taken by Canada."

The opponents of the Government stood on firmer ground, however, when they denied the constitutional competency of Canada to enact the British preference in face of the German and Belgian treaties. The treaty with Belgium of 1862 and that with the German Zollverein of 1865 prevented differential treatment by British colonies in favour of the United Kingdom, unless the concessions were also extended to all foreign powers which enjoyed favoured nation treaties with the Mother Country. They did not, however, prevent differential treatment by Great Britain in favour of British colonies, nor differential treatment by British colonies in favour of each other. Long, persistent, and fruitless effort had been made to secure relief from these treaties. Canada, in 1892, during the premiership of Sir John Abbott, had made representations on the subject, and the Colonial Conference, which met at Ottawa in 1894, adopted and forwarded to the Home Government a strong remonstrance against the restrictions which these treaties imposed upon the fiscal liberty of the colonies, and an urgent appeal for their abrogation. But the protest was ineffectual. The Imperial Government answered through Lord Ripon, Colonial Secretary, that to denounce the treaties would involve risk to the commerce of the United Kingdom with Germany and Belgium, and would require such trade to be carried on "under fiscal conditions, subject to constant changes and fluctuations, or, at all events,

without that permanence and security which is of primary importance to successful and profitable interchange." He pointed out also that no scheme had been proposed which promised any precise advantages to be secured to the export trade from the United Kingdom to the colonies in the event of the termination of the treaties with Belgium and Germany.[1]

This was the position when the Fielding tariff was brought down in the Canadian Parliament, and when objection was made by the Conservatives that these treaties were fatal to its enactment and operation. It is true that the Canadian tariff was not a direct discrimination in favour of Great Britain, or rather it was true that any low tariff country could take advantage of its provisions. But practically it offered material advantages only to Great Britain, and this was clearly the intent and purpose of the Canadian Administration. Mr. Laurier and his colleagues had boldly challenged the policy of the Mother Country, and it rested with British Ministers to say that the German and Belgian treaties were inoperative in the circumstances, to denounce the treaties, or to inform Canada that her discrimination in favour of the Empire, and pledge of loyal devotion could not be accepted. If, however, the boon were rejected, the Canadian Government must be discredited and humiliated, and public confidence in its discretion and sagacity

[1] Statistical Year Book of Canada, 1894, page 305.

greatly impaired. It was, in fact, vital to the credit and reputation of Canadian Ministers that the British preference should go into effect, and that the German and Belgian treaties should be denounced.

The year in which the Fielding tariff was adopted in Canada was the sixtieth anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. The event was commemorated by a great jubilee celebration in London, and Mr. Laurier crossed over to represent Canada in the ceremonies. But beyond conspicuous participation in this remarkable home-coming of the British people, he had serious practical business to perform. Popular opinion in the Old Country had received the Canadian tariff with gratitude and acclamation, and it was now necessary to persuade British Ministers to recognize the rising Imperial sentiment of all parts of the Empire, and legitimatize the action of Canada by abrogating the German and Belgian treaties. Mr. Laurier was thoroughly informed as to the conditions of opinion in Great Britain. He knew that the Liberal party adhered with rigid tenacity to the old free trade doctrines of Bright and Cobden, and that very few among the leaders of the Conservative party would tamper with any form of protectionism. He knew that the economic sensitiveness of free traders was easily touched, and that he must be infinitely discreet in all his public references to the new Canadian tariff and to the commercial relationships between Great

Britain and the colonies. If he had associated his exposition of the motives which led Canada to offer the British preference with a demand for preferential treatment of Canadian goods in British markets, he would at once have excited the free trade press to vigorous attack upon his policy and his demands, popular opinion would have been roused to regard the Canadian tariff as only the first step toward a system of Imperial protection, and such influences would have been arrayed against the Canadian policy and in defence of the German and Belgian treaties, that British Ministers would perhaps have hesitated to act, the wave of sympathetic enthusiasm for Canada would have been substantially checked, and we should not have recovered our fiscal freedom. But Mr. Laurier wisely considered British sentiment. He presented the Canadian preference as a free gift to the old land, designed alike to promote Imperial trade and Imperial unity, and so won immensely upon British opinion, and greatly fashioned the public temper which persuaded the Imperial Government to denounce the treaties which stood in the way of effectual adoption of the Canadian tariff. It is doubtful if we have yet recognized the full magnitude of the service thus performed for Canada and the Empire, the bold and brilliant method of Mr. Laurier's diplomacy, and the far-reaching significance of the policy of the Canadian Government.

There remained still other work for Mr. Laurier

to do at Westminster. There was held in connection with the Jubilee celebration an Imperial conference at which the various colonies were represented by their Premiers, and some subjects of great colonial and Imperial concern exhaustively considered. While no conclusions of special consequence were reached, the discussions were doubtless useful and profitable. The Home authorities exhibited a special interest in the question of Imperial defence, and sought to learn the mind of the colonies with regard to direct or indirect contributions for the maintenance of the defensive forces of the Empire. The colonial view, however, was not materially modified by the representations of British Ministers. This view, in short, was that the colonies were developing great stretches of the Imperial domain, that they had to meet heavy expenditures for the construction of railways and other great public undertakings, that there was no comparison between the domestic obligations and requirements of a finished country like England, and a new and virgin territory like Canada, that the growth of the colonies was substantially growth and strengthening for the Empire, and that until the heavy burden of colonial development was materially reduced, direct contributions for Imperial defence could not be fairly exacted. While there is force and validity in this reasoning there is yet a further word to be said on the question. The sea power of Britain is the fortress of British trade, and the main guarantee of peace in

the world; and whether in peace or in war, the maintenance of these world-circling fleets bears heavily upon British taxpayers. We enjoy the protection and security which this armament maintains, and while we may be reluctant to vote direct contributions to be expended by the British authorities, it is not at all clear that we should not make an indirect contribution of men or ships to the navy, and relieve Britain of all responsibility for the defences of Canada. These responsibilities we should have to meet if we were an independent country, and we have no right to accept a less obligation as a part of the British Empire. It is true that British connection may involve us in quarrels that as an independent country we would escape, and it is perhaps equally true that connection with the Empire saves us from perils that we could hardly confront as an independent community. There is, therefore, a further word to be said on the question, and Canada will hardly shirk any legitimate obligation which falls upon her as an integral part of the British dominions. There is, at this writing, an active and increasing interest in the proposition advanced by Col. Geo. T. Denison, and the Canadian Branch of the British Empire League, in favour of imposing a special duty of 5 per cent. upon all foreign goods imported into Great Britain and the colonies in order to create a common fund for Imperial defence.

The question of preferential trade between the

colonies and the United Kingdom was also discussed with British Ministers. We have had the persistent assertion in Canada that Mr. Laurier rejected a direct offer of preferential treatment of Canadian products in British markets. Even such a careful work as that of Prof. John Davidson on "Commercial Federation and Colonial Trade Policy," gives countenance to this assumption. "To many Canadians," says Prof. Davidson, "it seemed then and seems still to have been a grand mistake not to make the concession, (that is, the British preference) the basis of negotiations, and there have not been wanting those who declare that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was false to the interests of Canada when he failed to demand a reciprocal concession, and still more, when he later repudiated the idea of making such a demand. This feeling is not confined to his political and outwitted opponents. Many of his supporters, who are in party bound to defend his policy in public, do not hesitate to express in private their regret that their leader failed to take advantage of his undoubted opportunities. It seemed so natural to strike while the iron of British prejudice was at the white heat of the jubilee year, and reap the full advantage of the sentiment which the Canadian offer evoked. He had placed himself on record as being in favour of preferential treatment in the English market, and it seemed the very refinement of punctiliousness not to ask and receive at such a time what he and

every Canadian wanted, and not an Englishman of them all would at that time have refused to grant. Lewd politicians of the baser sort have suggested that it was the prospect of the Cobden Club medal that made him thus betray the interests of Canada."

It is true that Professor Davidson goes on to argue that while Mr. Laurier may have been false to the interests of Canada, he was true to the interests of the Empire; that a reciprocal concession might have been made in the haste of sentiment, to be repented of in the leisure of experience; that the Canadian Premier showed good taste as well as good statesmanship in refusing to take advantage of a jubilee enthusiasm; and that to have rushed matters then would have been detrimental to the interests of the Empire, and would have created within a few months a party in English politics hostile to the colonies, which is the very last thing an imperially-minded statesman would desire to create.[1]

This is perhaps a plausible explanation of Mr. Laurier's course, but the writer misunderstood some of the essential features of the situation. The critics of the Canadian Prime Minister speak with some warrant when they say that he was invited to consider a proposition for preferential trade within the Empire. The proposition, however, involved the absolute removal of all Canadian duties upon British manufactures, and upon no other basis would Mr.

[1] "Commercial Federation and Colonial Trade Policy," by Professor John Davidson, pages 75, 76.

Chamberlain even consider preferential treatment of Canadian products. If Mr. Laurier could have accepted these terms on behalf of Canada, and the other colonies could have been induced to join in the agreement, Mr. Chamberlain, at least, stood ready to advocate the proposal before the British people and the agitation for a British Zollverein would have assumed active form and shape in British politics. But considerations of revenue, aside altogether from the position of Canadian industries, necessitated the rejection of the proposition, and there are probably few persons in Canada who believe that Mr. Laurier could have decided otherwise under the circumstances. When we reflect that important Canadian industries now profess to be suffering from the competition which the British preference directly sanctions and promotes, and that the Australian Commonwealth has just adopted a protectionist tariff, we can see what small option of choice in the premises was left to the Prime Minister of Canada. Nor is it clear that Mr. Chamberlain spoke, or professed to speak, for the British Cabinet.

On the subject of these conferences, or at least upon the question of preferential trade, Mr. Chamberlain has since said: "If there were to be any kind of fiscal arrangement with the colonies, I believe the only form that would meet with the slightest favour would be an Imperial Zollverein in which there would be free trade between the

portions of the Empire and duties as against strangers." When asked point blank during the same debate in the Imperial Parliament if he had offered preferential trade to Canada, the Colonial Secretary answered: "I have never done anything of the sort. It is one of those mistakes of which I am so largely the victim, and which, perhaps it would hardly be worth while to contradict, until the occasion becomes urgent."[1] The Duke of Devonshire in a letter to the Hon. Wm. Mulock was equally definite. He wrote: "While I congratulated Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Dominion of Canada on the offer which has been made to admit British goods at reduced rates, as compared with those on the goods of other nations, as an important step in the direction of Imperial unity, I have no authority to offer, and did not offer to Canada a preference in British markets."[2] Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the uncompromising leader of the rigid free trade element in the Conservative party of Great Britain, declared at Liverpool a year or two ago that he did not believe in the idea of preferential duties in favour of the colonies as compared with foreign countries on the imports of the United Kingdom. Any such duties would be dangerous in

[1] See Mr. Chamberlain's speech on a motion by Mr. Hedderwick in favour of direct representation of the colonies in the Imperial Parliament, April 3rd, 1900.

[2] Letter from the Duke of Devonshire to the Hon. Wm. Mulock, May 2nd, 1899.

the utmost degree to the foreign trade, which was essential to the prosperity of Great Britain. But he entirely sympathized with the remark attributed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Prime Minister of Canada, when he said that in his opinion an Imperial Zollverein could not possibly be attainable without absolute free trade within the Empire. This great question could only be approached and dealt with on the principle of free trade, and any attempt to deal with it on any other principle was unkind and unfair to the colonies themselves. His own opinion was that any person in the colonies or in Great Britain who founded his views as to the future on the possibility of any solution of this question, except on the basis of free trade, was founding his views upon a foundation of sand, and he would not for the world, having some experience in matters of this kind, hold out to his fellow-subjects in the colonies that Great Britain could deal with the question on any other basis than free trade.[1]

It may be that on preferential trade, as on Imperial defence, the last word has not been said. No one can say that free trade is the irrevocable policy of Great Britain, or that an advance towards freer trade may not characterize future colonial policy. The hostile tariffs of other great manufacturing nations, and the pressure of foreign competition in British markets may force the Mother

[1] Speech at Liverpool, October 24th, 1900.

Country to re-arm herself with protectionist duties, if only for the purpose of negotiating reciprocity treaties with her more formidable rivals. There may even arise in Great Britain the feeling that colonial competition is only less objectionable than foreign competition, and as in the exclusion of Canadian live cattle from British ports, her legislation may look only to the protection and promotion of the interests of the population of the British Islands. For the moment, however, as Mr. Chamberlain has said: "We have a proposal by British free-traders which is rejected by the British colonies; we have a proposal by colonial protectionists which is rejected by Great Britain."[1] The signs of the hour point to growth in Imperial unity, if not so directly to an Imperial trade alliance. We in Canada have discriminated in favour of British manufactures, established Imperial penny postage, contributed heavily towards the construction of the Pacific Cable, and spent freely in men and money for the cause of the Empire in South Africa. We shall doubtless go on and improve direct cable communication between this country and Great Britain, and perfect, it may be at heavy cost, the facilities for ocean transportation between Canadian and British ports. All this has its Imperial as well as its Canadian aspect, and Canadians may feel that they are discharging, in full measure, all their legitimate obligations

[1] Mr. Chamberlain at a dinner of the Canadian Club in London, March 25th, 1896.

to the Mother Country. It is necessary to add at the risk of misunderstanding, that it is not easy to conceive a Zollverein arrangement that would not restrict the freedom of the colonies, and tend with changing circumstances to produce irritation and unrest; and that the trade relations between Great Britain and the colonies will probably be better controlled by concurrent legislation than by a joint tariff.[1]

It has been explained that the Fielding tariff

[1] "It must not be forgotten that at present about one-fourth of the export trade of this country consists of foreign and colonial produce, and that the imposition of duties on foreign produce would involve an enormous immediate outlay for the extension of bonding facilities, and the necessary charges for their use and maintenance. The result would be to place such obstacles in the way of this trade that its transference elsewhere would speedily take place, goods which this country now receives for export being sent direct to their market, or through some other *entrepôt* where they would not be subjected to such disabilities. Thus the position of this country as the great market of the world, already threatened, would be destroyed. These changes could not fail to seriously injure our important carrying trade and react injuriously on every industry in the United Kingdom. On the other hand the gain to the colonies, whatever it might be, would, even at first, be altogether incommensurate with the loss to the Mother Country. And it is improbable that there would be any permanent gain, for, apart from the general loss of purchasing power due to the fall in wages and profits resulting from the imposition of duties, it is obvious that the reduction of our imports from foreign countries would be followed by a reduction in our exports to them, no inconsiderable part of which consists of colonial produce imported in a crude state, and more or less manufactured in this country. The demand, therefore, for colonial produce, even with the preferential advantage proposed to be allowed to it, would not be likely to increase, and the price obtained for it would, therefore, not be ultimately enhanced."—Reply of the Marquess of Ripon to the Resolutions of the Colonial Conference of 1894.

provided a lower scale of duties for the goods of such countries as admitted the products of Canada on terms as favourable as the rates fixed by our minimum schedules. It was found, however, that owing to the operation of the most-favoured-nation treaties with Great Britain, complications were likely to arise under these provisions. Mr. Chamberlain, in dealing with this point at the Imperial conference, said: "Let me suppose, for instance, that Holland offered these advantages, thereupon Canada would be compelled to give the same terms to Holland as she now offers to the Mother Country. She would then be bound by most-favoured-nation treaties to give the same terms to practically every important commercial country in the world." Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that the difficulty could be obviated by confining the preferential offer to Great Britain. It does not appear that the position of the United States was considered by Mr. Chamberlain, or that the change afterwards made had any special reference to that country. The difficulty arose mainly through treaty arrangements between Great Britain and other European powers. In June, 1898, therefore, the preferential tariff was amended so as to apply only to Great Britain and such British colonies as give favourable terms to Canadian products, and this change took effect on August 1st, 1898. The limitation of the preference to Great Britain, although necessitated by Imperial treaties, was in consonance with Canadian opinion, and

represents probably the exact policy that the Canadian Government would have adopted in 1897 if the German and Belgian treaties had not seemed to forbid direct preferential treatment of the Mother Country.

Mr. Laurier received many honours in England, and made a remarkable and enduring impression upon the British people. He accepted honorary degrees from Oxford and Cambridge, and with reluctance, a knighthood from the Sovereign. His reluctance to receive knighthood was not due to any mere contempt for titles, nor to any particular desire to cultivate democratic opinion. He simply was averse on personal grounds to the acceptance of decorations, and to a distinction which seemed not quite consistent with his simple living and political training. He recognized, however, that his refusal of knighthood under the exceptional circumstances would seem ungracious and even pretentious, and would be misunderstood and misrepresented. He therefore accepted the recognition, and has never thought it necessary to explain or justify his action. He was one of the few conspicuous figures of the Jubilee celebrations, and in fact from the moment that he delivered his first speech at Liverpool he took rank as an Imperial statesman. His courteous bearing, gift of speech, and grasp of mind all had a singular charm for the English people, and there was a freshness and vigour about his addresses that contrasted favourably with the unemo-

tional oratory of British politicians. He put Canada before the British people, not as a sucking infant clinging to the Mother Country, but as a free, self-governing kingdom, and Canadians, not as an inferior order of half-caste Britons, but as fellow-subjects of Englishmen at home, seeking neither gift nor favour, and asserting full sovereignty within their own domain. It can be said with literal truth that the English press has spoken of Sir Wilfrid Laurier with as much warmth and as much enthusiasm as has ever been exhibited by the Liberal press of Canada even in the heat of an election campaign, and that without one qualifying or discordant note; while at the clubs and in country houses his charm of manner, his simplicity and quiet gravity, and store of literary and historical fact and anecdote deepened the impression of elegance and force which his public addresses had created.

He was hardly less successful in handling the press and the public opinion of Paris. The French press had got into quite an ugly mood over the language of his speeches in England, and met the Canadian visitor with few cordial words on his arrival at the French capital. But the Premier made two or three addresses, frank, sincere, and manly, speaking in Paris just what he had spoken in London, and the press was disarmed, and the best opinion of France won over, while his fine qualities of heart and mind and straightforward candour and courage

received cordial recognition. He accomplished this by no trick of platform legerdemain or specious juggling with words, but by a plain, frank expression of his feeling as a man of French blood and birth, and a reasoned, deliberate, eloquent assertion of pride and satisfaction in his British citizenship. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has always been great enough to know that in order to be a good Catholic it is not necessary to flout and insult Protestantism, and that in order to be a loyal and self-respecting British subject, it is not necessary to throw gibes and sneers at other countries. His attitude in Paris, therefore, was that of one who had no shame for his French birth and blood, and only admiration and reverence for the brilliant French people and their noble work for human civilization, but still of one who from his birth was a British subject, and felt it a simple duty, despite his race and blood, to declare his personal love for British institutions, and the unquestioning loyalty of his country to the British Empire. Surely there have been few more suggestive incidents, even in British history, than the pilgrimage of this courtly, gifted, eloquent descendant of the founders of New France and of the race of Montcalm, to the Imperial capital, whence Wolfe had his commission to plant the British flag on the rock of Quebec; thence on to old France, to the ancient seat of the Bourbon kings, whence Montcalm was sent out to hold Quebec for his country; and there to speak as the

first citizen of a Quebec bound inviolably to Britain, and to glorify British rule in the New World. This is the very romance of history.

Among men of all parties and of all races in Canada there was genuine pride in the recognition which Sir Wilfrid Laurier received in Great Britain, and a very general consciousness that he had greatly served the interests of his country. His home-coming was marked by sincere and generous demonstrations of popular welcome. Bonfires blazed all along the St. Lawrence from Quebec to Montreal, the Capital received him back with unaffected cordialty, and later, in the presence of the most distinguished representatives of all classes, professions, interests, and parties, he was banquetted by the Boards of Trade of Montreal and Toronto, where hearty gratitude was expressed by the selected spokesmen of a united people for his great and effectual services to Canada.

CHAPTER XXVII

IMPERIALISM AND RACIALISM

THE preferential tariff and other Imperial measures of the Liberal Government, coupled with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's visit to the Old Country, and the surprising growth of Imperial sentiment which these measures and events directly stimulated alike in Canada and in the British Islands, had much to do in fashioning that public temper which sent colonial contingents to the aid of the Empire in South Africa. It is not necessary here to review at length the relations between Dutch and British in the Transvaal, and the course of the negotiations to secure rights of citizenship for the Uitlanders without resort to arms. Probably war was hardly contemplated by the British Government until the British provinces of Natal and the Cape Colony were invaded by the burghers of the Free State and the Transvaal. Few of us now doubt the necessity for the war from the standpoint of British interests and British supremacy. Few of us doubt that Mr. Kruger plotted and waited, resolved to strike at some perilous moment in the fortunes of the Empire. Few of us doubt that if the Transvaal had not issued its insolent ultimatum the war would not have come, and the good Queen would not have

gone down to the grave with sorrow in her heart and tears upon her cheeks for the slain of her Imperial household upon the battlefields and in the camps and hospitals of South Africa.

But while this is true we shrink from any searching examination of the methods employed alike by Dutch and English to heat the blood and inflame the passions of the two races. It has been made very clear that when the fatuous and criminal Jameson raid had failed, the capitalists of the Rand proceeded deliberately and systematically to buy up the English press of South Africa. They established or obtained control of the *Cape Argus*, the *Cape Times*, the Johannesburg *Star*, the Transvaal *Leader*, the Buluwayo *Chronicle*, the Rhodesia *Herald*, the Kimberley *Advertiser* and the *African Review*. Into these agencies for the manufacture of public opinion they put hundreds of thousands of dollars, and a hostile British witness has declared that they constituted "nothing else than an elaborate factory of misrepresentations for the purpose of stimulating British action." These papers gave the tone to the smaller and less influential English journals of South Africa. These were the offices which the correspondents of the British press frequented, and from these sources the British world received its interpretations of the motives of the Dutch leaders and its impression of the conditions which prevailed in the Transvaal.

Upon the other hand, the Dutch press was

subsidized and inspired by the corrupt oligarchy at Pretoria, the concession holders who fattened upon the disfranchised miners and mine-holders of Johannesburg, and the greedy Hollanders who plotted and intrigued to establish Dutch supremacy over Natal and the Cape Colony. It was inevitable that under such circumstances the meaner side of every incident, and the darker side of every transaction should be presented alike to Dutch and British, and that suspicion and bad feeling and hatred and passion should infect all the relations between the two populations. The quarrel was fed by charge and counter-charge, by insinuation and misrepresentation, by misunderstanding and misjudgment, by untimely appearances of the ghosts of Slagter's Neck, and by the looming shadows of Majuba Hill.

But to expose and condemn these methods is not to involve the British Government in any deliberate conspiracy to provoke hostilities. It is the fashion to describe Mr. Chamberlain's diplomatic methods as rash and masterful, to suspect his motives and even to pervert his utterances. Perhaps no other public man in the world excites equal rancour and hatred in the breasts of his opponents. But the policy of Mr. Chamberlain was probably informed and guided by Sir Alfred Milner, who when he left Great Britain to assume the post of High Commissioner at the Cape, was universally regarded as a man of moderate counsels, of conciliatory temper, and of singular fitness for maintaining good relations

between the races in South Africa, and for accomplishing a pacific and satisfactory settlement with the Transvaal authorities. It cannot be that he was transformed at once from a man of peace to a man of blood, and from a pacific negotiator to a quarrelsome despot. It is more likely that he discovered that the relations between President Kruger and the Rand capitalists had become hopelessly estranged, that Kruger's hatred of the capitalists extended to the British Government, and that he was resolved to drive the British out of South Africa in case the Empire should become involved in a quarrel elsewhere. It became therefore the policy of Sir Alfred Milner to force recognition of the rights of the Uitlanders by strenuous negotiation, and by a transfer of political power to the disfranchised citizens of the Transvaal to limit the authority of President Kruger and reform the administration at Pretoria. Mr. Kruger resisted even to the point of war, and as a last desperate expedient invaded and attacked the British colonies. This will probably be the final reading of history and the substantial justification of the British Government.

In the summer of 1899, an agent of the Uitlanders came to Canada, and represented to the Canadian authorities the situation in South Africa. The Government at Ottawa probably also understood that the British Ministry hoped that a display of the moral force of the Empire would induce Mr. Kruger to yield to the demands of Sir Alfred

Milner and Mr. Chamberlain, and agree to a satisfactory compromise of the grave questions at issue. In any event, on July 31st, 1899, Sir Wilfrid Laurier introduced and Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution declaring that the House viewed with regret the complications which had arisen in the Transvaal Republic, of which Her Majesty is Suzerain, from the refusal to accord to Her Majesty's subjects now settled in that region any adequate participation in its Government; that the House had learned with still greater regret that the condition of things there existing had resulted in intolerable oppression and had produced great and dangerous excitement; and that therefore, "This House, representing a people which has largely succeeded by the adoption of the principle of conceding equal rights to every portion of the population, in harmonizing estrangements and in producing general content with the existing system of Government, desires to express its sympathy with the efforts of Her Majesty's Imperial authorities to obtain for the subjects of Her Majesty who have taken up their abode in the Transvaal such measures of justice and political recognition as may be found necessary to secure them in the full possession of equal rights and liberties."[1]

In introducing the resolution the Prime Minister spoke very briefly. He said: "If I be asked: 'What is the reason of this expression of sympathy; what

[1] Hansard, July 31st, 1899, page 8,994.

object would it serve; what result would it effect?' I simply answer: 'The object to be sought is that we should extend to our fellow-countrymen in South Africa the right hand of good fellowship, that we should assure them that our heart is with them, and that in our judgment they are in the right; the object would be to assure the Imperial authorities, who have taken in hand the cause of the Uitlanders, that on that question we are at one with them, and that they are also in the right;' and perhaps the effect might be also that this mark of sympathy, extending from continent to continent and encircling the globe might cause wiser and more humane counsels to prevail in the Transvaal, and possibly avert the awful arbitrament of war."[1] The resolution was seconded by the Hon. Geo. E. Foster, and perfunctory and obvious observations were made by Mr. McNeill and Mr. Clarke Wallace. A letter was also read from Sir Charles Tupper, in which he declared we were "bound to give all the aid in our power to Her Majesty's Government in the present crisis." Resolutions to the same effect were adopted by the Senate, where the Hon. David Mills, with that wide information and exceptional mastery of Imperial questions for which he is distinguished, reviewed the situation in South Africa in a compact and instructive address.[2]

Thus we agreed to sympathetic intervention, and

[1] Hansard, July 31st, 1899, pages 8,992-8,994.

[2] Senate Debates, August 1st, 1899, pages 1,075-1,082.

it has been held that by this expression of sympathy and of opinion we were committed also to material aid when war resulted. It is the fact, however, that the object of the resolutions was to promote peace, not to provoke war, and it is just as true that the question of Canadian participation in case war should come was not at all in the mind of Parliament. War was not then seriously expected by the Imperial authorities, and in truth, two days before the Boer ultimatum was issued, a British Minister, then on this side of the Atlantic, insisted that war was out of the question. But the war came, and at once there arose a clamorous agitation for the despatch of Canadian contingents to South Africa. It is not necessary to question the sincerity or the purpose of the journals which led in this movement, but probably concern for the Empire was not wholly separated from concern for the interests of the Conservative party. At any rate they expressed the overwhelming sentiment of the Canadian people, at least in the English-speaking provinces, and there was genuine popular enthusiasm behind the movement. Mr. Tarte, the Minister of Public Works, now appeared, not as resisting the despatch of Canadian contingents, but as opposed to action without the direct authority of Parliament. Mr. Bourassa, a French Canadian Liberal, took the same ground, and even resigned his seat in Parliament as a protest against the final decision of the Government to send contingents without parlia-

mentary action. The position of Mr. Tarte and Mr. Bourassa provoked violent utterances from the more aggressive wing of the Conservative press, and some of these utterances were interpreted as attacks upon the whole French Canadian population, and indeed would very easily bear that construction. We were setting out to put down a race quarrel in South Africa by making a race quarrel in Canada. Naturally enough these rash and intemperate utterances were resented in Quebec, and probably created feeling against the organization and despatch of contingents.

It was while the controversy was taking this acute and dangerous form that there appeared an interview with Sir Wilfrid Laurier which seemed to question the power of the Governnent to send contingents without parliamentary sanction. The Premier said: "As I understand the Militia Act—and I may say that I have given it some study of late—our volunteers are enrolled to be used in the defence of the Dominion. They are Canadian troops to be used to fight for Canada's defence. Perhaps the most wide-spread misapprehension is that they cannot be sent out of Canada. To my mind it is clear that occasion might arise when they might be sent to a foreign land to fight. To postulate a case: Suppose that Spain should declare war upon Great Britain. Spain has, or had a navy, and that navy might be got ready to assail Canada as part of the Empire. Sometimes the best method of defending

one's self is to attack, and in that case Canadian soldiers might certainly be sent to Spain, and it is quite certain that they might legally be so despatched to the Iberian Peninsula." He proceeded to say that the case of the South African Republic was not analogous. "There is no menace to Canada, and although we may be willing to contribute troops, I do not see how we can do so. Then again, how could we do so without Parliament granting us the money. We simply could not do anything. In other words, we should have to summon Parliament. The Government of Canada is restricted in its powers. It is responsible to Parliament, and it can do very little without the permission of Parliament. There is no doubt as to the attitude of the Government on all questions that mean menace to British interests, but in this present case our limitations are very clearly defined. And so it is that we have not offered a Canadian contingent to the Home authorities." He added that while the Militia Department had duly transmitted individual offers to the Imperial Government, the question of furnishing a contingent, for the reasons stated, had not been discussed.[1]

This has been held to constitute a refusal by Sir Wilfrid Laurier to send Canadian contingents. But the language will bear no such construction, and was not intended to bear any such construction. It was simply a frank view of the incompetency of

[1] Ottawa despatch to the Toronto *Globe*, October 3rd, 1899.

the Government to act without parliamentary authority. The charge of inconsistency may lie against the Prime Minister, and even that, as future events will show, rests upon slight ground; but the attempt to show that he declared against the despatch of contingents cannot succeed. Ten days later, in response to an overwhelming public demand, the Government decided to send a contingent and to act without parliamentary sanction. The minute of Council recites that: "The Prime Minister, in view of the well-known desire of a great many Canadians who are ready to take service under such conditions (as prescribed by the Imperial Government), is of opinion that the moderate expenditure which would thus be involved for the equipment and transportation of such volunteers may readily be undertaken by the Government of Canada without summoning Parliament, especially as such an expenditure under such circumstances, cannot be regarded as a departure from the well-known principles of constitutional Government and colonial practice, nor construed as a precedent for future action."

Here again there has been clear misinterpretation of the position of the Government. It has been argued that the Order-in-Council authorizing the equipment of contingents guards against the creation of a precedent for Canadian participation in the wars of the Empire, while, as a matter of fact, the language of the minute guards only against the creation

of such precedent without the authority of Parliament. Mr. Sanford Evans, in his book on the Canadian contingents, admits that by grammatical construction the Order-in-Council must be so interpreted, but adds: "It is clear on many grounds that the Government considered no principle finally settled by their action, and, therefore, no precedent created upon principle. They met an emergency. The will of the people must prevail; but if new principles of administration are sought, they have yet to be formulated."[1] Now is it not clear that under the present constitution of the Empire no other course is open to a colonial Government? While the colonies have no voice in making the wars of the Empire, could they wisely or properly declare that the precedent of participation in the war in South Africa should constitute a precedent for the action of the colonies in all future conflicts in which the Imperial Government may engage? The colonial Governments, practically debarred from all counsel and from all preparation, ignorant of the Imperial purpose until war is declared, can only decide upon emergency, and it was therefore only necessary, and in truth only possible, for the Canadian Government in the case under consideration to provide that its assumption of military expenditure without parliamentary sanction should not constitute a precedent.

[1] "The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism," by W. Sanford Evans, page 67.

The case was well put by Mr. Mills in the Senate, when he said: "We required either the approval of Parliament, or the general sanction of the political sovereignty of this country, from which Parliament derives its existence. There was such an expression of opinion in this country as to justify the Government in the course which they took. We knew well that the Government had no legal authority to propose to send a contingent or propose meeting the expenses of the contingent, otherwise than it felt sure that by a bill of indemnity Parliament would hold it harmless from all expenditure which might be so incurred; and so we adopted a rule which has been adopted in emergencies in England, and that is the constitutional rule of seeking the support of public opinion in anticipation of the approval which will be subsequently given by Parliament."[1] It is hardly necessary to argue that we should not establish any precedent which would vest in the Executive the power to send out Canadian soldiers even to Imperial battle-fields without the authority of Parliament. Great Britain does not make war without the sanction of Parliament and the proper constitutional grant of supplies, and the outlying British dominions cannot afford to be less zealous for the sovereignty of the people in the most vital emergency that can arise in the life of a free community.

Mr. Tarte's position was as sound constitutionally

[1] Senate Debates, February 6th, 1900, page 26.

as it was destructive politically. The popular temper demanded the immediate organization of contingents, and any one who stopped to consider constitutional methods of procedure, or to emphasize the gravity of the contemplated departure in Canadian policy, was held to be indifferent to the fortunes of the Empire, opposed to the war itself, and hostile, under any circumstances, to Canadian coöperation with British troops in South Africa. Besides, Mr. Tarte was French and belonged to Quebec, and therefore upon the one hand was associated with the intemperate utterances of some of the Quebec journals, and upon the other made the subject of extreme and inflammatory attack by the more rash and intemperate journals and politicians of the English-speaking provinces. The general result was to put the French province on the defensive, and to establish the unfortunate impression that the French people of Quebec were hardly less objectionable to British Imperialists than the Dutch of South Africa. There was friction also over the action and bearing of Imperial officers in Canada, who, unused to official responsibility, and untrained in the methods and maxims of constitutional Government, were full of the idea that they had actual authority over questions of policy, and were animated by a hazy and hesitating impression that the Government of Canada was a sub-department of the Colonial Office, and the soldiers of Canada subject only to Imperial orders. Even under such

unusual circumstances it was necessary to assert Canadian responsibility and authority, and to check revival in the guise of Imperialism of the meddlesome and autocratic spirit of Bond Head and Metcalfe. Such friction as existed, due perhaps to inexperience and misunderstanding, rather than to any deliberate desire to make mischief or to usurp the functions of Canadian Ministers, did not extend to the Home Government, nor affect in any measure the good relations between the Canadian Cabinet and British Ministers. There is no ground for the impression that our contribution of troops was due to Imperial coercion, or that Imperial officers in the colonies, who misread their instructions and misunderstood the principles of responsible Government, acted by direct inspiration of the Home Government.

In the meantime it was found that the preparations of the Militia Department for the despatch of Canadian regiments were well advanced, and within only two weeks from the date of the Government's definite determination to send a contingent, the troops embarked at Quebec for the long voyage to the Cape. The organization of the various companies at widely separated points of the country was attended with striking manifestations of popular enthusiasm, and the embarkation at Quebec was significant and memorable for the sympathetic and whole-hearted coöperation of French and English in farewell demonstrations over the departing

soldiers. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speech on the occasion was felicitous, moving, eloquent, and nobly expressive of the profound sentiment of attachment to British institutions which the embarking troops represented. The Prime Minister said:

"In wishing you God-speed I pray that God may accompany you, direct you and protect you on the noble mission which you have undertaken. Upon this occasion it is not so much the God of battle as the God of justice whom we invoke. It is inspiring to reflect that the cause for which you men of Canada are going to fight is the cause of justice, the cause of humanity, of civil rights and religious liberty. This war is not a war of conquest or subjugation. It is not to oppress the race whose courage we admire, but it is to put an end to the oppression imposed upon subjects of Her Majesty in South Africa by a tyrannical people. The object is not to crush out the Dutch population, but to establish in that land, of which Her Majesty is Suzerain, British sovereign law, to assure to all men of that country an equal share of liberty. This is an unique occasion in the history of the world; it is a spectacle which ought to make every Canadian feel proud of his country. Who could have believed a few years ago that from this city, which had been the theatre of a bitter conflict between the two proudest races of the world, their descendants, who to-day are a happy and united people, would go forth to help carry the blessings of their own

institutions to a far distant land? Who could have believed thirty-two years ago that the scattered provinces of British North America would have reached such a point of development to-day that they would be able and willing, and cheerfully willing, to cement with their blood the unity of the Empire in its most distant part? Men of the Canadian contingent, I have no recommendation or request to make to you, but if I had it would simply be to do your duty. More than this we cannot ask; more than this you cannot do. If you do your duty, and I know you will, you take your places side by side with the Dublin Fusiliers, the Gordon Highlanders and the Lancashires, who only last week carried the colours of England to the topmost heights of Glencoe, Dundee, and Eland's Laagte. If you do your duty your proud countrymen will share your glory. Should any one of you unfortunately lose life or limb, your country will feel that you have fully discharged the duty under which you place her this day by this sacrifice to Canada's glory, the glory of the Empire, and, above all, to the cause of justice, humanity, and liberty.[1]

A second contingent was sent upon the heels of the first, embracing a large detachment of North-West Mounted Police and there was also added to the contributions from Canada the fine corps, equipped and despatched by Lord Strathcona. Infantry and mounted men alike performed arduous

[1] Speech at Quebec, October 30th, 1899.

and splendid service throughout the twelve months of their engagement, participated in the long and weary marches from the sea to Johannesburg and Pretoria, faced the fire of the enemy, the disease which lurked in the camp and along the trail, the fatigue and peril of outpost duty, the danger of ambush, the hazard of raid, of sudden encounter, of rash pursuit, with the patience, the steadfastness, the valour, and the endurance of British veterans. It may be that some of the Canadians who volunteered for service in South Africa combined the spirit of adventure with the spirit of patriotism, but whatever their motives, they represented an Imperial temper in the Canadian people, and their gallant behaviour in the field and admirable bearing under all the circumstances of the campaign were of great moral and material benefit to Canada.

It was unfortunate, however, that the war should have come on the eve of a general election in Canada. While our soldiers on South African battle fields maintained the best traditions of the race, at home we traded in Imperialism in order to serve paltry political ends, and nursed racial bigotry for party purposes. The Imperial authorities only required that Canada should equip the Canadian troops and bear the cost of their transportation to Cape Town. Thereafter they took the status of Imperial troops, received Imperial pay and became subject to Imperial regulations. There was some feeling in Canada that we should support our

contingents in the field as well as meet the charges for equipment and transportation. It was expected when Parliament met for the session of 1900 that the Opposition would offer an amendment to this effect, and failing acceptance of the proposition, force the Administration into direct antagonism with the flowing tide of Imperial sentiment. But the motion was not forthcoming, and it soon began to appear that other influences had entered into the counsels of the Opposition. A few weeks later Sir Charles Tupper made a speech at Quebec, which, while not inconsistent with his historical attitude, was in remarkable contrast to his strenuous advocacy of the despatch of contingents. He attacked Sir Wilfrid Laurier for giving a tariff preference to Great Britain without exacting preferential treatment of Canadian products in the British market, and represented the Liberal leader as an advocate of Imperial federation under which Canada would be required to contribute $46,000,000 a year for Imperial defence. He recalled the fact that he was mainly instrumental in breaking up the old Imperial Federation League, which stood for colonial contributions to the support of the British army and navy, and warned those whom he addressed against any policy which would make Canada responsible for any regular contribution to the permanent military defences of the Empire.[1]

This was perhaps sound enough, and at least

[1] Speech at the Garrison Club of Quebec, March 31st, 1900.

it was a fair statement of the policy of the Conservative party under Sir John Macdonald, and quite consistent with all his own past utterances.[1] He had always contended that in constructing canals and railways, and in subsidizing steamships for commercial purposes, Canada was doing her fair share for the support of the defences of the Empire, and should not be called upon for direct contributions to the British army and navy. This view will be found in many of his speeches and in many of his contributions to periodical literature. In 1893 he wrote a self-congratulatory letter over a cautious report by the executive committee of the Imperial Federation League in favour of a preferential tariff. The committee of the League said: "The sense of the permanence of the political union would naturally induce the people of the various countries in the Empire to make, for the sake of strengthening

[1] In 1885, during the war in the Soudan, New South Wales offered the Imperial Government a body of troops. This induced Lord Hartington, the Secretary for War, to put himself into communication with the other colonies. The Canadian Government, however, replied to the intimation that colonial aid would be received by offering to sanction recruiting in Canada for service in Egypt or elsewhere, but stipulated that the entire cost must fall on the Imperial Exchequer. The War Office in reply to Canada said: "The offer of the Government of New South Wales, which has been accepted by Her Majesty's Government, was to provide an organized force, fully equipped and ready for immediate service, and the Government of the Dominion will no doubt fully appreciate the difference between the two offers as regards the use which could be made of them by Her Majesty's Government, and will not, Lord Hartington feels sure, consider that in declining their patriotic offer for the present any undue preference has been given to the colony of New South Wales."

the union, fiscal arrangements which under existing circumstances they are not prepared to adopt." In comment thereon Sir Charles Tupper observed: "Knowing as I do, that the most active members of the Imperial Federation League were mainly intent on levying a large contribution on the revenues of the colonies for the support of the army and navy of Great Britain, I am delighted to have been able, almost single-handed, to obtain such a report from such a committee. Unfortunately, they captured Mr. Parkin, and having used him here, are now using him in Canada to create the false impression that we do nothing to maintain the defence of the Empire, instead of showing, as he truthfully could, that we have entitled ourselves to the gratitude of every man who has the interest of the Empire at heart."[1]

This is a position which can be strongly supported. It is, as has been said, the view which Sir Charles Tupper had always entertained. It is known also that Sir John Macdonald was resolutely opposed to the participation of Canada in the wars of the Empire. But while the Conservative press and the Conservative politicians in the English provinces were denouncing Sir Wilfrid Laurier as recreant to the interests of the Empire, and timid and faint-hearted in his proffer of aid to Imperial arms in South Africa,

[1] Letter from Sir Charles Tupper read at the annual meeting of the Canadian Branch of the Imperial Federation League, at Montreal, February 19th, 1893.

it was surely a strange proceeding for the leader of the Opposition to go down to Quebec and attack the Prime Minister for seeking to involve Canada in an annual expenditure of millions for the defence of Imperial interests. Sir Charles Tupper also declared at Montreal that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was too English for him, with his programme of Imperial federation, and the plain purpose was to rouse against the Liberal leader such prejudice as existed in Quebec against the despatch of the contingents and the Government's general support of the British cause in South Africa.[1]

One of the Conservative campaign documents, intended for use in the French constituencies only, said that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, during the Jubilee year, had committed the fatal mistake of giving vent to words that were binding us to the war destinies of Great Britain, and that he had advocated Imperial federation, while Sir Charles Tupper had opposed that project. A Conservative candidate made a bitter attack on the Government for sending troops to aid Great Britain in what he described as an unjust war, a war entered on from the basest motives, for robbery, plunder, and rapine. *Trifluvien*, the Conservative journal at Three Rivers, said that in order to gain British honours Sir Wilfrid Laurier had "sacrificed the sweat of our

[1] "As far as Sir Wilfrid Laurier is concerned, you can say that he is too English for me with his programme of Imperial federation."—Sir Charles Tupper in an interview in *La Presse*, Montreal, August 20th, 1900.

workmen, the backbone of our industries, even the blood of our children." An influential Conservative member of the Quebec Legislature said that "the Bordens, the Chamberlains, and the Huttons" were dragging Canada into participation in the wars of the Empire. *Le Monde Canadien*, a Conservative journal, said that the Conservative policy was "Canada for the Canadians," while Sir Wilfred Laurier's "British to the core" was a word of surrender. *L'Évènement*, also a Conservative journal, asked whether it was necessary to espouse all the quarrels of England, just or unjust, furnish targets for her enemies' guns, applaud her damnable acts and proclaim a victory when her army suffers defeat.

In Ontario a very different spirit informed and dominated the Conservative campaign. Here, however, the attack was upon Mr. Tarte rather than upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Mr. Tarte's contention that troops should not be sent to South Africa without parliamentary authority was remembered and held to constitute opposition to aid for Great Britain in any event. The utterances of *La Patrie*, edited by the sons of the Minister, were persistently represented to be his personal opinions, and these were not always acceptable in the English provinces. But the speeches of Mr. Tarte at Paris, where he represented Canada at the Exposition, constituted the grand bill of indictment. Mr. Tarte has denied that the speeches were accurately reported, but he has never furnished any explicit or

detailed correction of these utterances. In one of his addresses at Paris he was declared to have said: "Canada has not sent any troops against the Transvaal. She has merely authorized the enrolment of volunteers destined for the expedition. Canada has dressed those volunteers and transported them. This is a very different matter." And again: "Allow me to say so and allow me to repeat it, we have remained French; we are more and more so; we are more French than we were twenty years ago, and more than we were a year ago." He was also reported to have said: "I will say, as I have often said before, that I am French, that I was never anything but French, and that I will always be French," and, "I will not venture to prophecy concerning the future of Canada, but it may be supposed that in ten or twenty years, when the population shall have grown to as many millions, England may find it embarrassing to keep such a heavy child in her lap, and as the French Canadians increase numerically much faster than their compatriots of different origin, there is room for hope that a great and glorious destiny still awaits us."

This was rare material for a party conflict, and it was used with deadly effect in the English constituencies. On the other hand, the more extreme utterances of Conservative papers and Conservative speakers in the English provinces were put into French, and circulated in behalf of the ministerial candidates in Quebec. Nor can this be described as

other than a legitimate defensive measure, or at least a natural retaliation, in view of the attempt to destroy the Government there on account of its contribution of Canadian regiments to the Imperial service. There are few more humiliating and deplorable chapters in our history than this, and few more depressing illustrations of the extent to which racial feeling can be exploited to the destruction of the sense of national unity in the Canadian people. It seemed for the moment that racialism was the main birth of Imperialism, and that in dedicating some of the best blood of Canada to the cause of Imperial unity over seas we had produced only dissension and disunion at home. Mr. Tarte vehemently protested against the interpretation put upon his Paris speeches, but explanations seldom carry far in the heat of a political campaign, and the Paris reports were too useful to his opponents to be sacrificed to any protest or to any explanation that the Minister could offer. In one of his speeches during the campaign, Mr. Tarte said:

"They say that I am disloyal, but they do not prove it. I defy them to prove it, for I am not disloyal, never was and never will be. My opponents have published a pamphlet, full of lies, purporting to be reports of various disloyal speeches made by me while in France. They are most unblushing falsehoods. The Canadian public man who would go to a foreign country, who would utter disloyal words, would be a traitor. That man

is not myself. The traitors to Her Majesty Queen Victoria and to the British flag which floats over us and grants us all our liberties are those who try to set the various races in this country against one another. . . . I was born under the Union Jack—yes, and I live under it, and enjoy and appreciate the liberties it represents. I am a loyal subject of Her Majesty the Queen. I deserve no special credit for that. Why should we not be loyal? Are we not happy? I have just returned from Paris, where I had the opportunity of studying at close range some forty-two different nations and their forms of government. And I found that no form of government was so satisfactory as ours; that no people were so free, and had so much reason to be happy and contented as have we in this Canada of ours. . . . My traducers say that I tried to sell this country to France, and that if I did not deliver the goods it was not my fault. Just as if I and the French Canadians were so lost to a sense of honour and all sense of self-interest as to wish to transfer our allegiance from Britain to France. Where is the fool in my race who would for a moment wish to be ruled by France, and under the systems which prevail in France? We are French Canadians, but we are British subjects; yes, loyal and devoted subjects of Her beloved Majesty, Queen Victoria."[1]

This doubtless represented Mr. Tarte's real opinions and expressed the dominant sentiment of the

[1] Mr. Tarte at Windsor Hall, Montreal, October 22nd, 1900.

Province of Quebec. But nothing could avail to check the fervour of protest and the fury of indignation which his opponents had set going. "Only one flag for Canada," they cried. We must maintain Canada as "a British country" they declared. "Shall Tarte rule?" they asked. "Let us vote," they pleaded, "against absolution, boodleism, racialism, disloyalty, and Tarte." It is not pretended that this was the only issue in the contest, but it was unquestionably its chief and outstanding feature in many constituencies. It is remarkable, however, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was received everywhere with unusual marks of affection and respect, and even in Toronto, where his candidates met a signal defeat, his visit created extraordinary interest and enthusiasm. He was frank and straightforward as to all his dealings with the contingents, boldly admitted that the Government had considered and hesitated, and deliberately argued that in face of such a momentous step no other attitude would have become the Administration. For example, in Toronto, the very seat and centre of Imperial feeling, he said:

"I am here as I have been in the Province of Quebec, to speak the same things to vindicate my course. I am free to say that I was not over hasty in sending the contingent. Sir Charles Tupper, when he addressed the people of Toronto here, from this very platform, made it a cause of reproach to me that I did not rush forward for the

sending of the contingent, that I had told an interviewer that to do so would be unconstitutional and irregular. I have not a word to retract from what I said then. Sir Charles Tupper may rush, perhaps plunge his hands into the public treasury and take $2,000,000, but I must say when I have no parliamentary authority to take money from the public treasury I shall always hesitate and be slow. We had no authority from Parliament to send a contingent to South Africa. We had no authority to take money to provide for the expenditure, and I want to know, my fellow-countrymen, are you prepared to blame a man occupying the position I do if he hesitates before taking money without the authority of Parliament from the public treasury? Under parliamentary government I ask if it would be possible or desirable for one single instant that the Government of the day of their own free pleasure, however worthy the cause, should have authority to take money from the public treasury and expend it at their own will. Sir, we had no authority at that time, and, as I said at the outset, I cannot be blamed for not doing what we had no authority for, and the only justification we could have was the mandate from the people which was expressed in no unmistakable manner. That was my authority. I say more because I have nothing to disguise upon this question. I had hoped to the last that there would be no war. I hoped to the last that the Uitlanders would get their rights

from Mr. Kruger's Government, not by the use of force, but simply by the means of reason applied to the case. I hoped to the last that the bonds of union which in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries had existed between Britain and Holland would still be remembered. I hoped to the last that those great principles of freedom which Holland and England held in common against the continent of Europe would be remembered, and would have their effect in the settlement of the Uitlanders' rights. Well, I go one step further and meet my opponents on every point. I will not hesitate to do so. There is a French proverb among the people of Quebec. I am one of them and I know the feeling of my countrymen. The proverb I speak of is 'Blood is thicker than water,' and the issue may not appeal to my fellow-countrymen of French origin as it appealed to you. Still we are British subjects, and claim the rights of British subjects, and we assume all the responsibilities this entails. There are men foolish enough, there are men unpatriotic enough to blame us and to say that I should have rushed on and taken no precautions to guide public opinion in my own province. That is not my way of governing the country. That is not my way of settling a difficulty. I told you a moment ago that I would not swim with the current, I would endeavour to guide the current, and on that occasion I tried to do so. But a moment came in this question when President Kruger sent

his insolent ultimatum, and there was a wave of indignation passing over all the British Empire, and then I said there is no longer any hesitation, we must act, and we did act on October 14th; and within three weeks our boys were on the ocean. Nor is that all. I told you a moment ago that I am of French origin. May I not be pardoned if I remember that among those boys who sailed from Quebec on October 31st there were boys of my own blood, There were boys of my own blood who in South Africa showed that the blood of the great nation that is in their veins has not degenerated. They fought for the Queen with the same valour as their ancestors had fought for the King of France, and we have cemented upon the soil of South Africa the unity of the Canadian nation."

He went on to say that like Sir John Macdonald he had discovered that Canada was a hard country to govern. It was necessary to take the course which could be adopted by all the men whose fortune it was to be upon the soil of Canada, and he charged that Sir Charles Tupper did not apply himself to settle difficulties, but sought to gain power by arraying section against section. He quoted the statement of the Opposition leader at Montreal that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was too English for him, and his subsequent repudiation of the statement at Toronto, in the assertion that the Premier was not half English or Imperial enough. "Am I to be denounced," Sir Wilfrid asked, "in my

own province to those who are of my own blood and creed and race as being too English, and am I to be denounced among you, gentlemen, as not being English enough?"

He proceeded: "I am of French origin, and I tell Sir Charles Tupper and his followers that neither I nor my fellow-countrymen will be Uitlandered in the land of our birth. I am of French origin, but I have said again and again, and I need not repeat it to you, that I am a British subject. I claim all the rights of a British subject; I assume all the duties of a British subject as well. This is the policy I intend to maintain, this is the policy I have followed in Quebec, this is the policy which I have tried to inculcate among my fellow-countrymen of the same race as I am myself. If we are to become a nation, we must once and for all cease these appeals to creed and race. We must fight upon lines which appeal to all races, to all creeds, and which appeal to all Canadians. Have we not been separated long enough? And has the time not come when a man can say: 'I am a Canadian, first, last, and all the time?'" Addressing the young men in the galleries, he said: "It is to them that I wish to appeal in this contest, while we are in the throes of a general election, and although they may not, perhaps, all have the right to vote, let them remember this, though we may be separated by race and language, by our antecedents, by tradition, let me assure them that whether in Quebec, in Ontario,

or in Manitoba, there are chords in the human heart which can be tuned by the same key, the key of pure and lofty patriotism." Turning to the motto over the platform, he read out the words: "Union, Peace, Friendship, and Fraternity," and he said: "I used those words at Montreal, amongst my fellow-countrymen of my own race; I use them again among my fellow-countrymen of Ontario. The words are not mine. They are the words of Lafontaine, addressed to the Reformers of Upper Canada in 1841. The times are different, the cause is still the same, and the battle has to be once more won."[1] The speech moved the great meeting profoundly. Many times the orator's course was checked by sympathetic and prolonged cheering. Notwithstanding all the clamour of the hour, and all the passion and prejudice which the contest evoked, it is still true that the appeal found its enduring echo in the deep-seated sentiment of a very great body of the citizens of Ontario.

One other incident in this remarkable chapter in Canadian history cannot be overlooked, for it fills out Sir Wilfrid Laurier's conception of the Imperial relationship, and of the duty Canada owes to the Empire in days of stress and storm. During the session of Parliament preceding the election, Mr. Bourassa, who had broken with the Government over its South African policy, moved and supported with an exhaustive speech a resolution affirming

[1] Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Toronto, October 16th, 1900.

the principle of the sovereignty and the independence of Parliament as the basis of British institutions and the safeguard of the civil and political liberties of British citizens; asking that the action of the Government in relation to the South African war should not be considered as a precedent which should commit Canada to any action in the future; and declaring that any change in the political and military relations which exist at present between Canada and Great Britain should be opposed unless such change was initiated by the sovereign will of Parliament and sanctioned by the people of Canada.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, when he came to discuss the subject, said that he found no particular fault with the principles enunciated in the amendment, but he challenged altogether the opportuneness or the necessity for its introduction. He met the argument of Mr. Bourassa that in appropriating money for the contingents without the sanction of Parliament, the Government had violated the principles of the British Constitution, by quoting precedents from British history. Among these were the purchase of Blaca's collections of coins and antiquities for the British museum, and Disraeli's purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal, and the action of Pitt, as thus described by Todd: "At the commencement of the French revolutionary war, Mr. Pitt advanced enormous sums, amounting to upwards of £1,200,000, to the Emperor of Germany, to aid in the defence of the general interests in

Europe, without the previous sanction of Parliament. Upon the attention of the House of Commons being directed to this affair it was proposed to pass a vote of censure on the Minister, but his friends interposed, and induced the House to agree to an amendment, declaring that the proceeding in question, though not to be drawn into precedent but upon occasion of special necessity, was, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, a justifiable and proper exercise of the discretion vested in His Majesty's Ministers by a former vote of credit."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier then pointed out that "there were British Liberals in those days, just as there are to-day in this Parliament also. There were Liberals who had not only the label on their breasts and the badge on their necks, but the principles in their hearts, just as much as any Liberals have them to-day. There was Fox in the time of Pitt, and Gladstone and Bright in the time of Disraeli, and there the authority of Parliament was sanctioned by those Liberals, who held that Parliament could sanction the expenditure of money in certain emergencies." He denied that it was a weak thing to be guided by public opinion in sending troops to South Africa, and said:

"What would be the condition of this country to-day if we had refused to obey the voice of public opinion? If we had refused at that time to do what was, in my judgment, our imperative duty, it is only too true that a most dangerous

agitation would have arisen—an agitation which, according to all human probability, would have ended in a line of cleavage upon racial lines. A greater calamity could never take place in Canada. My honourable friend and I have long been on terms of intimacy. He has long been a political friend and supporter of mine. He knows as well as any man in this House knows, that if there is one thing to which I have given my political life it is to try to promote unity and harmony and amity between the diverse elements of this country. My friends can desert me, they can withdraw their confidence from me, they can withdraw the trust which they have placed in my hands, but never shall I deviate from that line of policy. Whatever may be the consequences, whether loss of prestige, loss of popularity, or loss of power, I feel that I am in the right, and I know that a time will come when every man, my honourable friend himself included, will render me full justice in that respect."

He made an eloquent defence of the justice of the British cause in South Africa, and a spirited denial of the charge that the hand of Canada had been forced by the British authorities. "No," he said, "we were not forced by England, we were not forced by Mr. Chamberlain or by Downing street, to do what we did, and I cannot conceive what my honourable friend meant when he said that the future of this country was not to be pledged by this Government. When and where did we pledge

the future of this country? We acted in the full independence of our sovereign power. What we did we did of our own free will, but I am not to answer for the consequences or for what will take place in the future. My honourable friend says that the consequence is that we will be called on to take part in other wars. I have only this to answer to my honourable friend, that if it should be the will of the people of Canada, at any future stage, to take part in any war of England, the people of Canada will have to have their way. Let me say to my honourable friend further, the maxim which he has advocated this afternoon and which he took from the despatch of Lord Grey to Lord Elgin, 'It must be remembered that the government of the British Colonies in North America cannot be carried on in opposition to the will of the people,' was the language in 1847, it holds good in 1900, and will be the language used so long as we have free parliamentary institutions in Canada. But I have no hesitation in saying to my honourable friend that if as a consequence of our action to-day the doctrine were to be admitted that Canada should take part in all the wars of Great Britain and contribute to the military expenditure of the Empire, I will agree with him that we should revise the conditions of things existing between us and Great Britain. If we were to be compelled to take part in all the wars of Britain, I have no hesitation in saying that I agree with my honourable friend

that, sharing the burden, we should also share the responsibility. Under that condition of things, which does not exist, we should have the right to say to Great Britain, 'If you want us to help you, you must call us to your councils; if you want us to take part in wars let us share not only the burdens but the responsibilities as well.' But there is no occasion to say that to-day."

He pointed out that the Government had called for volunteers, but had compelled no man to go to South Africa. It had simply provided the machinery and expenses to enable these volunteers to offer their lives for the honour of their country and the flag they loved. He continued:

"Shall the sacrifice be all on the one side and none on the other, the obligation all on the one side and none on the other? We were not compelled to do what we did, but if we chose to be generous, to do a little more than we were bound to do, where is a man living who would find fault with us for that action? He dreads the consequences of this action in sending out a military contingent to South Africa. Let me tell him from the bottom of my heart that my heart is full of the hopes I entertain of the beneficial results which will accrue from that action. When our young volunteers sailed from our shores to join the British army in South Africa, great were our expectations that they would display on those distant battlefields the same courage which had been displayed by their fathers when

fighting against one another in the last century. Again, in many breasts there was a fugitive sense of uneasiness at the thought that the first facing of musketry and cannon by raw recruits is always a severe trial. But when the telegraph brought us the news that such was the good impression made by our volunteers that the Commander-in-Chief had placed them in the post of honour, in the first rank, to share the danger with that famous corps, the Gordon Highlanders; when we heard that they had justified fully the confidence placed in them, that they had charged like veterans, that their conduct was heroic and had won for them the encomiums of the Commander-in-Chief and the unstinted admiration of their comrades, who had faced death upon a hundred battlefields in all parts of the world, is there a man whose bosom did not swell with pride, that noblest of all pride, that pride of pure patriotism, the pride of the consciousness of our rising strength, the pride of the consciousness that on that day it had been revealed to the world that a new power had arisen in the West? Nor is that all. The work of union and harmony between the chief races of this country is not yet complete. We know by the unfortunate occurrences that took place only last week that there is much to do in that way. But there is no bond of union so strong as the bond created by common dangers faced in common. To-day there are men in South Africa representing the two branches of the

Canadian family fighting side by side for the honour of Canada. Already some of them have fallen, giving to the country the last full measure of devotion. Their remains have been laid in the same grave, there to remain to the end of time in that last fraternal embrace. Can we not hope, I ask my honourable friend himself, that in that grave shall be buried the last vestiges of our former antagonism? If such shall be the result, if we can indulge that hope, if we can believe that in that grave shall be buried contentions, the sending of the contingents would be the greatest service ever rendered Canada since Confederation." [1]

This speech had an extraordinary effect upon Parliament. It was cheered tumultuously by members on both sides, and the crowded galleries set decorum at defiance, and joined with uncontrollable enthusiasm in the demonstration below. It touched the heart of Canada and in Great Britain was received with unaffected praise and gratitude, praise for its power and beauty and finish, gratitude for its splendid vindication of the British cause, and splendid utterance of the love and devotion of the Canadian people to the embattled Empire. It stands as the most eloquent and impressive speech which the war has evoked.

[1] Hansard, March 13th, 1900, pages 1,837-1,847.

Dr. Geo. R. Parkin, C.M.G., speaking to the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Toronto, pronounced this the noblest speech ever delivered by a colonial Minister.

All this was said and all these events occurred before November 7th, 1900, when the people of Canada declared their judgment upon the first Administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The historian of the future will marvel greatly at some of the results of the polling. If he shall look through the musty, worm-eaten files of the chief journals of the time he will find that the contest turned largely upon the first despatch of Canadian troops to serve in a British war overseas. He will find that these soldiers were sent by a Government at whose head was a French Canadian. He will find that the French Province of Quebec was represented as hostile to the war, seething with disloyalty, and honeycombed with sympathy for Britain's enemies. He will find that the English Province of Ontario was aflame with loyal enthusiasm and royally proud of the contribution of troops to the cause of the Imperial mother. He will find that the Government which equipped and despatched the soldiers of Canada to South Africa, carried fifty-eight out of the sixty-five seats in the disloyal Province of Quebec, and thirty-four out of the ninety-two seats in the loyal Province of Ontario. And he shall surely feel that if he write faithfully the story of these records there will be pronounced upon his work the judgment of that man who said, "I believe everything but history; history is a lie."

If he shall look further he will find that there was a hearty Canadian feeling, but a less intense

British feeling in the Province of Quebec, than prevailed in the other provinces; that there were in Quebec a few vagrant visionaries, bred and reared in old France, who dreamed of a new French power on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and were esteemed by their fellow-countrymen much as the Scottish people regard some lonely and forsaken Jacobite who lives far back in centuries past and gone, and looks still with yearning eyes for the restoration of the Stuart dynasty; that there was in Quebec a sentimental attachment to old France, and the tri-color, but beyond and before all, a deep contentment with British institutions, and a cordial recognition of all the essential duties and responsibilities of British citizenship. If he shall look still further he will find that while there were occasional expressions of sympathy with Britain's enemies, and among public journals and isolated political groups in the Province of Quebec a disposition to question the justice of the war in South Africa, and the spirit and motives of the Imperial Government, still there were in the British Islands vastly harsher criticism and far more general attack upon British Ministers, a sterner arraignment of the policy and justice of the war, more direct, open, and positive sympathy with the Dutch Burghers, more general, irreconcilable, and irrepressible revolt against the whole method and purpose of Imperial policy. If he shall probe yet deeper for the roots of the problem he may find perchance among the age-worn volumes

in some old library a Report on the Affairs of British North America, written well back in the first half of the nineteenth century, by one Lord Durham, sometime Governor-General of the Canadas, and shall read therein:—"The difference of language produces misconceptions yet more fatal even than these which it occasions with respect to opinions; it aggravates the national animosities by representing all the events of the day in utterly different lights. The political misrepresentation of facts is one of the incidents of a free press in every free country; but in nations in which all speak the same language, those who receive a misrepresentation from one side, have generally some means of learning the truth from the other. In Lower Canada, however, where the French and English papers represent adverse opinions, and where no large portion of the community can read both languages with ease, those who receive the misrepresentation are rarely able to avail themselves of the means of correction. It is difficult to perceive the perversity with which misrepresentations are habitually made, and the gross delusions which find currency among the people; they thus live in a world of misconceptions, in which each party is set against the other not only by diversity of feelings and opinions, but by an actual belief in an utterly different set of facts."[1]

[1] Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America, London, 1839, page 25.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MAN AND HIS METHODS

SIR WILFRID LAURIER'S public career is remarkable for consistent and unchanging devotion to three great objects: the assertion and maintenance of the principle of federalism, ardent and unflinching championship of civil and religious freedom, patient and courageous resistance to the denationalizing tendencies of racialism, sectarianism, and provincialism.

His opinions were formed in the Whig school of England, and fashioned in the traditions of British Constitutionalism. This in itself is striking testimony to his native strength of character and exceptional capacity for independent thinking. He came upon the scene at the birth of Confederation, surrounded by eager agitators touched with the revolutionary zeal of continental Liberalism and still verging upon the excesses of the old *Rouge* programme. The spirit of his political surroundings was hostile to the Confederation settlement, resentful of Cartier's alliance with Brown and Macdonald, eager to accomplish Cartier's downfall even by appeal to the prejudices of his compatriots, and profoundly apprehensive of the effects of Confederation upon the social and political fortunes of the

French population. In face of all these adverse circumstances he perfected his English speech, read his English books, developed the constitutional temper of British statesmanship, and found in the principle of federalism ample guarantees for all the legitimate rights and interests of the race and the province to which he belonged, and the wider basis of a common nationality and a united British commonwealth.

Moderation is the keynote of all his career, and the secret of all his achievements. He learned at the threshold of his public life that the statesman must often resist popular clamour, and stand impervious to momentary gusts of popular passion, and that all enduring achievement must be based in the reason rather than in the emotions of the people. He has been distrustful always of extreme opinions and of intemperate advocacy. He has been doubtful always of the wisdom of violent changes and impatient of mere demagoguery. He would probably agree with that incisive judgment of Lord Morris that he never knew a small town in Ireland but had a blackguard in it who called himself "the people." Burke required in a statesman "a disposition to preserve and an ability to improve taken together." The disposition to preserve is an essential element in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's statesmanship, as indeed it must be the dominant principle of all successful government in free communities. It has been remarked elsewhere that in all his long and

stubborn contest with the Ultramontanes he permitted no angry or impatient word to pass his lips, scrupulously confined the quarrel to the political arena, maintained a sacred respect for the faith in which he was born, and zealously guarded the fame of the historical Church as a religious institution. So, in the field of constitutional reform he has striven for amendment within the Constitution, and has quietly but firmly antagonized all intemperate agitation for radical alteration of the terms of Confederation. For example, he has never countenanced the movement for abolition of the Senate. He has respected the prohibitions and sought to maintain inviolate the guarantees of the Act of Union. In the adjustment of tariffs he has adhered to a conservative programme, and set his face against rash and revolutionary disturbance of existing conditions.

The ideals of free trade find ever increasing sanction in his judgment and experience, but he recognizes practical conditions and moves no faster than the general interest seems to demand. He perceives that in some branches of manufacture the Canadian factory, with its limited market and necessarily restricted output, cannot compete successfully with the great specialized industries of the United States, and that Canada is bound, therefore, to maintain for such industries a measure of protection against American competition so long as Canadian manufactures are excluded from the

American market. He understands that it is not easy for a small community to adhere to free trade, in the teeth of powerful protectionist neighbours with a vast equipment of developed industries. Whatever weakness there may be in the position from the standpoint of sound economics, it is the fact that no modern community is willing to limit its activities to the single industry of agriculture. Even if Canadians were ready to accept American manufactures, rather than manufacture for themselves, it would still be necessary, so long as the revenue of the country is raised by customs taxation, to have a tariff that will afford a considerable measure of protection to native industries. It is necessary also to face the fact that protectionism is a vital part of modern nationalism. More and more the chief commercial nations are organizing themselves as great trading concerns. Great Britain is the exception, but that country is organized upon a free trade basis, and to return to protection would mean an enormous disturbance of her industries, and enhanced prices for the food of her people. It is possible that she may yet seek to establish preferential trading arrangements with the outlying British dominions, or perhaps limit the freedom of her ports in order to force open the ports of her competitors. But if the change come it will come slowly, and only in case her manufacturing supremacy should be successfully challenged by the developed industries of the protectionist nations.

In the meantime, Great Britain sends her manufactures all over the earth, gets in return cheap supplies for her factory population, and holds her sea-carrying supremacy.

The free trader argues that the United States does not furnish a fair example of the effects of protection. The protectionist contends that under modern conditions no other nation could prosper by the British free trade system. The first tells us that the astonishing progress of the United States is due to the absolute free trade which prevails all over its wide extent of territory, and between all its rich and populous communities, rather than to its high tariff against outside nations. The second argues that British industries got their early foothold under protection and secured their command of the world's markets while the industries of other communities were in process of development, and that the industries nourished by protection in other countries are now in a position to drive Britain out of neutral markets and even successfully invade her own markets. Thus the controversy stands. The spirit of nationalism in France, Germany, and the United States, buttresses the system of protection, while the newer Imperial spirit of the British communities looks to a British Zollverein as a means of combination and defence against the trade rivals of the Empire. Canada, in the meantime, has settled down to a policy of discrimination in favour of British products, and of necessary protection

against the United States, at least so long as Canadian products and manufactures are shut out of American markets. All these circumstances and tendencies Sir Wilfrid Laurier recognizes, and shapes his policy in reasonable conformity with the temper of the times, and in intelligent comprehension of the impotence of theories in face of practical conditions.

He understands that all wise and provident government waits upon public opinion and crystallizes into legislation the settled judgment of a majority of the people. He would probably accept Lecky's estimate of Walpole as the true interpretation of the function of the legislator. Lecky said that Walpole "belonged to that class of legislators who recognize fully that government is an organic thing, that all transitions, to be safe, should be the gradual product of public opinion, that the great end of statesmanship is to secure the nation's practical well-being, and allow its social and industrial forces to develop unimpeded, and that a wise minister will carefully avoid exciting violent passions, provoking reactions, and generating enduring discontents." It is easy and convenient for a leader in opposition to nurse radical movements and maintain a sympathetic alliance with the dissident elements of the community. It is necessary to the orderly course of government and the stability of the State, as well as to the political safety of ministers, for governments to sound the deeps of public opinion

and obtain some reasonable and authoritative sanction for progressive measures. Cavour once said to a novice in public life: "If you want to be a politician for mercy's sake do not look more than a week ahead." This may suggest the temper of the reactionary, but Cavour, at least, was not a reactionary, and perhaps his achievements rank with those of any man who ever played the great game of statecraft. His cynical sentence, however, keenly suggests the sudden surprises, the changes of wind and weather, the hidden snares and pitfalls which wait upon governments, and as keenly emphasizes the eternal wariness necessary to the successful management of an enfranchised democracy.

For the first three decades of Confederation the leaders of the Liberal party were but five years in office. It was natural, therefore, that the party should develop the destructive rather than the constructive spirit, and should chafe under the discipline necessary to the stability and solidarity of a governing organization. The spirit born of long years of opposition hampered Mackenzie and made the work of government exceedingly difficult for the first Laurier Administration. It is only now that the masses of the Liberal party are recognizing the changed conditions and the very different responsibilities which surround and beset men in office, and are settling down to an appreciation of the manifold tasks and difficulties of government in

Canada. It is true that in some of the provinces the Liberal party has had long periods of ascendancy. But the administration of the affairs of a Canadian province is vastly easier than the government of the complex racial and sectional elements which compose the Dominion, and federal rather than provincial issues mark the division between political parties in Canada. It is no secret that Sir John Macdonald preferred to have the provincial governments in the hands of his political opponents, and often shrank from identification with the destructive policies of provincial oppositions. The temper of defence rather than the temper of attack is essential to the comfort and safety of governments. A party long inured to opposition is slow to learn consideration for Ministers confronted with the actual tasks of administration, and slow to appreciate the danger and unwisdom of raw and premature legislation. Hence, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, like Alexander Mackenzie, found his first years of office greatly vexed by the impatient demands of isolated groups and diverse elements, and by the indisposition to concede that all sections of the country, and all substantial interests must receive recognition and consideration from a national administration.

It seems to be Sir Wilfrid Laurier's habit to reveal himself at Quebec. There were spoken perhaps the two greatest speeches he has ever delivered outside of Parliament. There is something personal and intimate in his address of 1877 on Political Liberalism,

and these qualities also peculiarly distinguish a speech of remarkable beauty, eloquence, and power, which he pronounced at Quebec in 1894. The later speech completes the earlier utterance, and the two constitute a creed of Liberalism and an expression of patriotism, as noble and as courageous as were ever pronounced by a Canadian statesman. The speech of 1894, like that of 1877, is a plea for moderation, for union, for civil and religious freedom, for a good understanding between the French and English races, for the subordination of all sectional aims and ambitions to the great work of unity and consolidation.

In 1877 he protested against the design to organize into a political party the Catholic element of the population; so he now protested against the design to establish a separate French nationality in Quebec. "I am of French origin," he said, "a descendant of that great nation, which, as remarked by a thinker, has provoked enthusiasm, admiration, hatred, envy or pity, but never indifference, because it has ever been great, even in its faults. I acknowledge that I am of French origin, but if I recognize the fact, I also recognize the position in which my race have been placed by the battle which was fought on the Plains of Abraham, and which is commemorated by a monument reared by you to the memory of the two commanders who there lost their lives. There are some amongst us who forget this state of things, who affect to believe that

a small French republic or monarchy—I hardly know what they want—should be established on the banks of the St. Lawrence. I cannot accept this idea, because those who use this language speak like slaves who would break their bonds if they dared, but who do not do so because they are cowards. For my part, I believe myself to be a free man, and this is why I am in favour of the actual régime."

He was happy, he said, to proclaim in the old French city of Quebec, that the basis and aim of the ideas and hopes of Liberals was to create a Canadian nationality. Their great object was the development of the work of Confederation, to draw closer, to bind and cement together, the different elements scattered over the face of British North America, and to weld them into one nation. This was the rôle of the Liberal party in the Confederation, and so long as he had a part in the shaping of its destinies this was the ideal towards which it should gravitate. He did not forget that the Liberals of Lower Canada feared Confederation. He did not forget that Dorion and the French Canadian Liberals were afraid that Confederation would prove the grave of the things which they should always regard as a sacred inheritance. But although he was a disciple of Dorion and a pupil of the Dorion school, he was bound to confess that on this point his ideas were those of Cartier rather than those of Dorion. There was no conflict between their

interests and their duty. They belonged to different races, not to war upon each other, but to labour together for the common good. It had to be said in justice to the memory of Dorion, that no sooner had the majority of the country pronounced in favour of the union than he and his friends rallied unreservedly to the support of the new order of things with the intention of each contributing in the measure of his strength to the success of Confederation. Lafontaine feared that under the union of 1841 the British majority would abuse their power to persecute the French race. Dorion feared that under Confederation the French minority would lose their influence and perhaps be subjected to humiliation. In the one case, as in the other, events had proved that these apprehensions had no justification.

There was room enough in this great country for all the races, all the creeds, and all the religions. If they were separated by language and religion they were united by liberty. "Is there," he said, "a man amongst us who forgets that when Papineau was struggling for the rights of his race and for the constitutional liberty which we to-day enjoy, his principal coadjutors were John Nelson, the Scotchman, and O'Callaghan, the Irishman? Is there a man who can forget that, when the constitutional voice was useless, when our representations and our remonstrances remained for years and years unanswered, and when the peasants

of St. Denis took up arms and faced the veterans of Waterloo, their commander was not a Canadian, but an Englishman named Wolfred Nelson? And, three days afterwards, when these same peasants were swept with the leaden hail at St. Charles, can it be forgotten that the man who again led them was an Englishman named Thomas S. Brown? How can these men or their descendants—English, Scotch, Irish, and French—who shed their blood to win for us the liberties we enjoy to-day, make use of the same liberties to tear each other to pieces? Far be from me the thought; let us be more broad-minded, and say that those who shared in the labour shall also share in the reward."

He deplored the fact that racial and religious sentiments were exploited in Canada. He declared that for many years the Conservative party had been an eminently religious party in politics. He believed in all modesty that in the ordinary things of life Conservatives were not any better than other people. Like Liberals, they were subject to all the frailties inherent in poor humanity. "But in politics we cannot hold a candle to them on the score of religion. The moment politics are in question they become terribly religious. Discuss any question with them of protection, free trade, finance or railways, and immediately their great argument amounts to this: 'Ah! we are religious, we are; but those other fellows opposite have not much religion.' I do not boast about my religion. It sometimes

happens to me, however, to go to church, and, when I do go there, the only thing I can do on entering is to say to the Lord, 'Pardon me, a poor sinner.' And when I raise my eyes I see close to the altar rails, almost on the very steps of the altar itself, Mr. So-and-So and his friends, whom you know very well, and who are saying: 'I thank you, O! God, that I am not like unto that publican there.'" He proceeded:

"I have always proclaimed, and again I repeat, that in politics we belong to the British Liberal school, to the school of Fox and Gladstone. In religion I belong to the school of Montalembert and Lacordaire, of the men who were the greatest perhaps of their age in loftiness of character and nobility of thought. I know of no grander spectacle than the spectacle of Montalembert and Lacordaire, two adolescents, two children almost, undertaking to conquer in France freedom of education, and succeeding in their object after many years of struggle. I know of no finer spectacle than that furnished by Montalembert confronting the French *bourgeoisie*, impregnated as they were with that dissolving materialism, the Voltairian skepticism of the eighteenth century, and exclaiming, 'We are the sons of the Crusaders, and shall not retreat before the sons of Voltaire.' I know of no grander or more beautiful spectacle than that of Lacordaire proclaiming from the pulpit of Notre Dame the truths of Christianity to the incredulous crowd,

and teaching them that life is a sacrifice and is only rendered worthy by duty accomplished. These are our models, and whether we be assailed or approved, we shall endeavour to imitate these models without fear and without reproach to the end. Unfortunately these men who rendered so much service to Christianity and struggled so much in its holy cause, were attacked and denounced as bad Catholics and as heretics by the men who, fortunately, did not constitute a school, for, if they had, they would have rendered Catholicism impossible. We have such men in our midst to-day; we have intolerant and extravagant Catholics who understand neither the times, the country, nor the surroundings in which they live. I mention these things, which you may think do not apply here, but which, on the contrary, have an immense application, for this reason: because if we have amongst us men who try to prostitute the Catholic religion to the ends of politics, there are also men in the Province of Ontario who are endeavouring to play the same game with the Protestant religion. There has just been formed in that province an organization called the Protestant Protective Association, whose object is to exclude all Catholics from the civil government on the pretence that they cannot be loyal citizens to the State, and that they are compelled by their faith, even in temporal matters, to obey the authority of the Pope. Gentlemen, standing here in the Province of Quebec, and

in the city of Quebec, you know as well as I do that these theories are positively false. Nevertheless, they are constantly repeated in Ontario."

He quoted the celebrated letter of Cardinal Newman, addressed to the Duke of Norfolk, in reply to Mr. Gladstone demonstrating that the theories of a certain school were not the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and pointing out that while the Pope possessed supreme jurisdiction in spiritual matters, he claimed none in temporal things. He gave Cardinal Newman's words: "Were I actually a soldier or sailor in Her Majesty's service, and sent to take part in a war which I could not in my conscience see to be unjust, and should the Pope suddenly bid all Catholic soldiers and sailors to return from the service, here, again, taking the advice of others, as best I could, I should not obey him." He recalled the fact that when Newman's pamphlet was written he was simply Dr. Newman, and pointed out that he was afterward raised to the purple, and contended, therefore, that his words, which were the words of the Church, constituted a complete reply to the Protestant Protective Association. His peroration was as brilliant as any that he has ever spoken:

"You are aware that in the eleventh century certain men started out from Normandy, Anjou, Brittany, and Angoulême to capture England. Duke William of Normandy was their leader, and our present sovereign is the last scion of a royal race

that dates back to William the Conqueror. In the sixteenth century men started from the same provinces of Normandy, Anjou, Brittany, and Angoulême to colonize the fertile lands on the banks of the St. Lawrence. In the next century the men of both races met face to face here, and you know what happened. Well, is it not permissible to hope that a day will come, when, instead of facing each other on hostile purpose intent, the men of the two countries, the descendants of the Bretons, Angevins, and Normans, who invaded England in the eleventh century, and the descendants of the Angevins, Normans, and Bretons, who peopled Canada in the sixteenth, will meet together, not to fight, but to hold the grand assizes of peace and commerce? I may not live long enough to see that day, but if my career should be sufficiently extended to allow me to take part in these assizes it will be a happy day to me. I shall attend them bearing with me my Canadian nationality, and I believe that I shall continue the work of Mr. Lafontaine and Sir George Etienne Cartier, and that the result will be all to the advantage of French Canada. Gentlemen, our situation as a country is full of difficulties, and those difficulties are no doubt immense. Still, there is nothing desperate about them. What this country needs above all is peace, concord, and union between all the elements composing its population. Let us show to the world that if we reverence the past, we also have a regard for the future. Let us show to

the world that union does not mean absorption, and that autonomy does not mean antagonism. Victor Hugo, recalling his double origin, used these fine words:

> 'Fidèle au double sang qu'ont versé dans ma veine,
> Mon père, vieux soldat, ma mère, Vendéenne.'[1]

Let us also be true to our double origin, true to the memory and the reverence of the great nation from which we have sprung, and true also to the great nation which has given us freedom. And, in all the difficulties, all the pains, and all the vicissitudes of our situation, let us always remember that love is better than hatred, and faith better than doubt, and let hope in our future destinies be the pillar of fire to guide us in our career."[2]

Sir Wilfrid Laurier has delivered few greater speeches in the House of Commons than those he pronounced upon the death of Queen Victoria, and upon the death of Gladstone. It was his privilege to meet both the great Queen and her great subject when he was in England, and for each he entertained respect and admiration hardly short of veneration. These speeches are remarkable for loftiness of thought, felicity of expression, and great and intimate knowledge of world-wide movements and events. In all of his speeches which do not touch strictly controversial issues, there is the even poise

[1] "True to the double blood that was poured into my veins by my father an old soldier, and my mother, a Vendean."

[2] Speech at Quebec, January 4th, 1894.

and the deep-searching spirit of the historian, and a serenity and sanity which reveal qualities that rarely find expression in the narrow field of partisan controversy. It is understood that Sir Wilfrid Laurier at one time designed to write a history of Canada from the union of 1841 to Confederation, but was deterred by political duties and particularly by his acceptance of the leadership of the Liberal party. Doubtless by his devotion to politics he has rendered vastly greater service to Canada than any service that he could have performed in the field of literature. In that field, however, he could have done useful and solid work, and if the country has gained much it has lost something by his absorption in public affairs. He cherishes a strong desire to do something for Canadian art and literature, and seeks zealously for a plan whereby this desire may be actively and practically furthered. Many of his speeches reveal the true historical insight and a profound conception of the underlying motives and currents of the conspicuous events of the age in which he has lived.

In the speech on Gladstone he told Parliament that the death of the great leader of British Liberalism was mourned not only by England, the land of his birth; not only by Scotland, the land of his ancestors; not only by Ireland, for which he did so much and sought to do more; but also by the people of the two Sicilies, for whose outraged rights he once aroused the conscience of Europe; by the

people of the Ionian Islands, whose independence he secured; by the people of Bulgaria and the Danubian provinces, in whose cause he enlisted the sympathy of his own native country. Since the days of Napoleon no man had lived whose name had travelled so wide and so far over the surface of the earth; whose name alone so deeply moved the hearts of so many millions of men. Gladstone in the minds of all civilized nations was the living incarnation of right against might, and the dauntless, tireless champion of the oppressed against the oppressor. His was the most marvellous mental organization which the world has seen since Napoleon, the most compact, the most active and the most universal.

He held that of the men who had illustrated this age in the eyes of posterity, four would outlive and outshine all others. These were Cavour, Lincoln, Bismarck, and Gladstone. If we looked simply at the magnitude of the results obtained, compared with the exiguity of the resources at command—if we remembered that out of the small kingdom of Sardinia grew united Italy, we must come to the conclusion that Count Cavour was undoubtedly a statesman of marvellous skill and prescience. Abraham Lincoln, unknown to fame when he was elected to the presidency, exhibited a power for the government of men which has scarcely been surpassed in any age. He saved the American Union, he enfranchised the black race, and for the task he

had to perform he was endowed, in some respects, almost miraculously. No man ever displayed a greater insight into the complex motives which shape the public opinion of a free country, and he possessed almost to the degree of an instinct, the supreme quality in a statesman of taking the right decision, taking it at the right moment, and expressing it in language of incomparable felicity. Prince Bismarck was the embodiment of resolute common sense, unflinching determination, relentless strength, moving onward to his end, and crushing everything in his way as unconcerned as fate itself. Gladstone undoubtedly excelled every one of these men. He had in his person a combination of varied powers of the human intellect, rarely to be found in one single individual. He had the imaginative fancy, the poetic conception of things, in which Count Cavour was deficient. He had the aptitude for business, the financial ability which Lincoln never exhibited. He had the lofty impulses, the generous inspirations which Prince Bismarck always discarded, even if he did not treat them with scorn. He was at once an orator, a statesman, a poet, and a man of business. As an orator he stood certainly in the very front rank of orators of his country or any country, of his age or any age. When Louis Blanc was in England, in the days of the Second Empire, he used to write to the press of Paris, and in one of his letters to *Le Temps*, he stated that Mr. Glad-

stone would undoubtedly have been the foremost orator of England if it were not for the existence of Mr. Bright. It was admitted that on some occasions Mr. Bright reached heights of grandeur and pathos which even Mr. Gladstone did not attain. But Mr. Gladstone had an ability, a vigour, a fluency which no man in his age or any age ever rivalled or even approached. That was not all. To his marvellous mental powers he added no less marvellous physical gifts. He had the eye of a god, the voice of a silver bell; and the very fire of his eye, the very music of his voice swept the hearts of men even before they had been dazzled by the torrents of his eloquence. He enforced the extension of the suffrage to the masses of the nation, and practically thereby made the government of monarchical England as democratic as that of any republic. He disestablished the Irish Church; he introduced reform into the land tenure, and brought hope into the breasts of those tillers of the soil in Ireland who had for so many generations laboured in despair. All this he did, not by force or violence, but simply by the power of his eloquence and the strength of his personality.

Even in low and trivial duties Gladstone was great. He ennobled the common realities of life. His was above all things a religious mind. The religious sentiment which dominated his public life and his speeches, according to the testimony of those who knew him best, also permeated all his actions

from the highest to the humblest. He was a man of strong and pure affections, of long and lasting friendship, and to describe the beauty of his domestic life no words of praise could be adequate. It was ideally beautiful, and in the later years of his life as touching as it was beautiful. The one trait which was dominant in his nature, which marked the man more distinctly than any other, was his intense humanity, his paramount sense of right, his abhorrence of injustice, wrong, and oppression wherever found or in whatever shape they might show themselves. Injustice, wrong, oppression acted upon him, as it were, mechanically, and aroused every fibre of his being, and from that moment, to the repairing of the injustice, the undoing of the wrong and the destruction of the oppression, he gave his mind, his heart, his soul, his whole life, with an energy, with an intensity, with a vigour paralleled in no man unless it be the first Napoleon.

Touching the vexed and disturbing question of self-government for Ireland, Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out that when Gladstone became convinced that Home Rule was the only method whereby the insoluble problem could be solved and the long open wound could be healed, he sacrificed friends, power, and popularity in order to give that supreme measure of justice to a long suffering people. Whether men favoured or opposed that policy, supported or condemned that measure, all must agree that it was a bold and a noble thought, to

attempt to cure discontent in Ireland by trusting to Irish honour and Irish generosity.

No more noble panegyric was passed upon Mr. Gladstone by voice or pen in all the British dominions, and history will find no more sympathetic and comprehensive estimate of his career and no more luminous survey of the great events that are forever linked with his immortal name than this brilliant oration of the French Canadian leader of the Parliament of Canada.[1]

Just as sympathetic, as felicitous, as comprehensive, as luminous and as eloquent was his speech on the death of Queen Victoria. He said that the grave had just closed upon one of the great characters of history, and her death had caused more universal mourning than had ever been recorded. There was mourning, deep, sincere and heartfelt, in the mansions of the great and of the rich, and in the cottages of the poor and lowly; for to all her subjects, whether high or low, whether rich or poor, the Queen, in her long reign had become an object of almost sacred veneration. There was sincere and unaffected regret in all the nations of Europe, for all the nations of Europe had learned to appreciate, to admire and to envy the many qualities of Queen Victoria, and esteem those many public and domestic virtues which were the pride of her subjects. There was genuine grief in the neighbouring nation of seventy-five million inhabitants, the kinsmen of

[1] Hansard, May 26th, 1898.

her own people, by whom, at all times and under all circumstances, her name was held in high reverence, and where, in the darkest days of the civil war, when the relations of the two countries were strained, almost to the point of snapping, the poet Whittier had well expressed the feeling of his countrymen when he exclaimed:

> We bowed the heart, if not the knee,
> To England's Queen, God bless her.

There was wailing and lamentation amongst the savage and barbarian peoples of her vast empire, in the wigwams of our own Indian tribes, in the huts of the coloured races of Africa and of India, to whom she was at all times the great mother, the living impersonation of majesty and benevolence. Aye, and there was mourning also, genuine and unaffected, in the farm houses of South Africa, still devastated by war, for it was a fact that above the clang of arms, above the many angers engendered by the war, the name of Queen Victoria was always held in high respect, even by those who were fighting her troops, as a symbol of justice, and perhaps her kind hand was much relied upon when the supreme hour of conciliation should come.

He glanced at the advance of culture, of wealth, of legislation, of education, of literature, of the arts and sciences, of locomotion by land and by sea, and of almost every department of human activity during the Queen's reign. To the eternal glory of the English literature of her time it could be said that

it was pure and absolutely free from the grossness which disgraced it in other ages, and which still unhappily was the shame of the literature of other countries. Happy indeed, he said, was that country whose literature was of such a character that it could be the intellectual food of the family circle and could be placed by the mother in the hands of her daughter with abundant assurance that while the mind was improved the heart was not polluted. The Queen was not only a model constitutional sovereign, but she was undoubtedly the first constitutional sovereign the world ever saw—she was the first absolutely constitutional sovereign whom England ever had, and England had been in advance of the world in constitutional parliamentary government. It could be said without exaggeration, that up to the time of the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne, the history of England was a record of continuous contest between the sovereign and the Parliament for supremacy. That contest was of many centuries duration, and it was not terminated by the revolution of 1688, for although after that revolution the contest never took a violent form, still it continued for many reigns in court intrigues and plots; the struggle on the part of the sovereign being to rule according to his own views; the struggle on the part of Parliament being to rule according to the views of the people. When the terrible year of 1848 came; when all the nations

of Europe were convulsed by revolution; when thrones were battered by the infuriated billows of popular passions; England alone, was absolutely calm and peaceful. Thrones crumbled to pieces like steeples in an earthquake, but the throne of the sovereign Queen of England was never disturbed; it was firm in the affection of her subjects. As the reign advanced, it became the pride of her subjects that there was more freedom in monarchic England than under any democratic or republican form of government in existence.

The most remarkable feature of the reign was the marvellous progress in colonial development, which, based upon local autonomy, ended in colonial expansion. Nowhere was this more splendidly illustrated than in Canada. The rebellious colonies of 1837 were now a nation, acknowledging the supremacy of the Crown of England, maintaining that supremacy, not by force of arms, but simply by their own affection, with only one garrison in Canada, and that manned by Canadian volunteers. There was likewise between England and the United States of America an ever-growing friendship. Of all the factors which had made this possible, the personality of the Queen was undoubtedly the foremost. It was matter of history that from the day of her accession to the throne the Queen exhibited under all available circumstances, an abounding and lasting friendship towards that country, which, but for the fault of a vicious

government, would still have formed part of her dominions—a friendship which could not fail to touch the minds and hearts of a sensitive people. He did not hope nor believe it possible, that the two countries which were severed in the eighteenth century could ever be again united politically; but perhaps it was not too much to hope that the friendship thus inaugurated by the hand of the Queen might continue to grow until the two nations were united again, not by legal bonds, but by ties of affection, as strong perhaps, as if sanctioned by all the majesty of the laws of the two countries.[1]

The element of humour is not predominant in many of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speeches. He has, however, a keen wit and dearly loves a jest or a story. He delighted in the lighter speeches of Nicholas Flood Davin, and finds the fresh and happy humour of Dr. Landerkin a source of perennial enjoyment. It is remembered that on one occasion when he was campaigning in Western Ontario he was invited to spend half an hour at a concert where the chief entertainment was provided by the Fax brothers. These popular comic vocalists, however, proved a greater attraction than his other engagements, and he could not be persuaded to withdraw until the close of the concert. No one in all the village audience more heartily enjoyed the entertainment than the leader of the Liberal party.

[1] Hansard, February 8th, 1901.

He is, in truth, fond of all clean humour, of gay badinage, of jovial company, of all kindly and sympathetic human companionship. Under such circumstances there is a lightness, a gaiety, a spontaneous and infectious wit in his conversation which his speeches seldom reveal. He can, however, counter readily upon an interrupter, he has an incisive and delicate satire, and if the occasion demand, he can be severely and unpityingly caustic. Parliament was greatly entertained when he clothed with judicial functions, elevated to the bench, and pronounced a grave and solemn judgment for each of the Conservative Ministers who heard argument of counsel, and judicially affirmed the necessity for the Remedial Order. He once compared Sir Charles Tupper to the old blind King of Bohemia on the battle-field of Crecy, valiant but blind, striking to right and left, and injuring no one but himself. Bantering the Conservative leader on his reminiscent exaltation of his own political services, he said that between Sir John Macdonald and himself they had sailed the ship of state pretty successfully; Sir John was at the helm and supplied the brains while Sir Charles supplied the wind; his blowing swelled the sails. Roughly interrupted at a public meeting by an Anglican clergyman who hinted at his Catholic faith and said he could teach him the true way, Mr. Laurier retorted: "Perhaps, but not in politics." In one of his speeches on the North-West rebellion he said that if he had

belonged to the half-breed community on the banks of the Saskatchewan he would have shouldered his musket in defence of the rights which the Government persistently denied, and in protest against the grievances it would not redress. This was tortured into a threat that he would "shoot down the Canadian volunteers," and the utterance was industriously exploited by the Conservative papers and politicians. He was addressing an English meeting in one of the Eastern counties of Quebec during the campaign of 1887, when a man rose in the audience and asserted that a few nights before he had heard Mr. Laurier tell a French meeting that if he had been on the banks of the Saskatchewan he would have shot down the volunteers. A second man jumped to his feet, declared that he had attended the same meeting, and he would bet five dollars that Mr. Laurier had not made any such statement. The accuser retorted that he would make an affidavit that Mr. Laurier had so spoken to his French audience. Mr. Laurier said from the platform: "Yes, you will swear, but you will not bet." He was once rallying Sir Mackenzie Bowell in rather tentative fashion, when the Conservative Minister called out, "Oh, don't hesitate, I have none of those scruples." Mr. Laurier said quietly, "Well, if you have no scruples, I have." During the term of the Mackenzie Government, Mr. Mousseau, a man of gigantic bulk, charged the Ministers with fattening on the sweat

of the people. Mr. Laurier, then tall, slim and delicate, pointed to his massive opponent and said, "If any one here is fattening on the sweat of the people, which is it, he or I?" A lady belonging to Western Ontario, of rare conversational gifts, quick-witted, apt in repartee, and of exceptional political sagacity, who spent many sessions at Ottawa with her husband, said to Mr. Laurier on the eve of the general election of 1896, "It has been a long chase." "Yes," he replied, "a very long one, but it is near the end." "Then," said she, "I hope I may be in at the death." At once, with all the grace and readiness of a courtier, he answered, "We will give you the brush."

Nature was prodigal of her gifts to Wilfrid Laurier. He has distinction of manner, a gracious dignity of bearing, a rich, sonorous voice, flexible, vibrant and variant as the tones of a perfect instrument; a face luminous, mobile and responsive to all the human emotions; ample stature, erect, commanding and finely proportioned; a head like a sculptor's model, once crowned with a wealth of luxuriant wavy locks, now thinning and falling back from a noble brow; ease and freedom of movement which suggest perfect physical development. He dresses with scrupulous care and perfect taste, as though jealous of all the advantages he has received from mother nature, and conscious that physical as well as mental gifts may be set to service. He has absolutely no petty vanity, and

in all his relations with men and all his ideals of living he is a thorough democrat.

There is something in the man which forbids undue familiarity, and yet absolutely nothing which prevents approach from the poorest and humblest. It is not the mere art of the politician which invites to his side, when he is out in the country districts, the gray-haired, toil-worn worker in field or shop, but an innate goodness of heart, an unaffected love of his kind, and a profound appreciation of the wordly wisdom and hard common sense and sound political temper of those we call the plain people. In the districts of Arthabaska, Drummond, and Megantic it is these people who are his firm and intimate friends, and they would smile at the thought that there was nothing behind the relationship other than the mere concern of a politician to retain political support. His friendships are enduring and not exacting, so long as he is persuaded of the good faith of those with whom he coöperates. He is neither boastful of his own achievements, nor contemptuous of the services which other men perform, nor jealous of the praise which other men receive. He is singularly free from prejudice in appraising the gifts and qualities of his political opponents. He rarely passes a harsh criticism upon Sir John Macdonald. He has always recognized the great difficulties which confronted the Conservative leader in the earlier period of Confederation, and the extraordinary skill and resource displayed in

his treatment of hard and vexing problems, and especially his supreme capacity for political leadership. He greatly esteemed Sir John Abbott, and had a strong admiration for the high legal attainments and singularly clear and powerful intellect of Sir John Thompson. He overlooks Sir Mackenzie Bowell's extreme partisanship in respect for his rugged personal honesty and thorough soundness of heart, and he has unstinted admiration for the marvellous physical vigour and invincible courage of Sir Charles Tupper. The soul of loyalty himself, he looks for loyalty in his associates; and there is something like humility in his simple gratitude for the undeviating support he has always received from Sir Richard Cartwright. He served under Mackenzie and under Blake with zeal and good faith, unbroken by any fitful detachment or querulous repining over persistent ill-fortune, and if his will could have prevailed Sir Richard Cartwright would have succeeded to the Liberal leadership.

He has a thoroughly philosophic temperament, and when he has done his best, accepts with easy resignation the judgment of the people. He is as calm and as self-contained in the heat of a political contest as at his own fireside in the placid discussion of literary, philosophic and general topics in which he delights. Amid all the clamour of the general election of 1891, the Montreal *Witness* said: "Mr. Laurier spent a quiet day, and though much wearied by his previous exertions, was bright

and pleasant to every one. What a relief to talk with a man so different from the hand-shaking, story-telling, cajoling politician! Mr. Laurier's charm of conversation and purity of character win him friends even from political opponents of the fiercest stripe. He is fighting his political battle like a man every inch, and making headway wherever electors take men first—politics afterwards." The Montreal correspondent of the Toronto *Mail* used very similar language. He wrote: "It is a remarkable fact that amidst all the excitement of the campaign, Mr. Laurier, the Liberal leader, pursues the even tenor of his way. Not since the opening of the campaign has he uttered a harsh word against his opponents. He has dealt with the issue on its merits, and to all the cries that have been raised he has made a dignified reply. Even his bitterest opponents admit that he is fighting the campaign like a man, and that his conduct is in remarkable contrast to that of some of the leading public men who are now parading the country."

It is perhaps as an orator that Mr. Laurier is pre-eminently distinguished. His speeches have much of the beauty and simplicity of Lincoln's addresses and State papers, with more of imaginative quality and oratorical intensity. He is more diffusive than Bright, but far less so than Gladstone. He lacks Gladstone's energy and is doubtless less ready to invite combat, less eager in his impulses, less restless in his environment. But once he has made his

decision he is bold, resolute, wary, and sagacious in the pursuit of his end. He has an infinite patience under attack and a thorough contempt for the mere tattle of partisan controversy. He seldom corrects the smaller misrepresentations of his objects and motives, and much that is said by a hostile press he wholly sets aside as of no practical account in the serious discussion of public questions. Few men are more apt in quotation or more skilful in citing historical and constitutional precedents calculated to touch the feeling and excite the sympathies of the audience he addresses. This comes of his deep reading and profound knowledge of Canadian and British history. There is more of the history of Canada in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speeches than in those of any other public man of his generation, and his remarkable historical equipment lends steadiness and sobriety to his career and saves him from rash identification with ephemeral agitations and hasty acceptance of social and economic theories which have cheated and betrayed in other times and other countries. He has neither the fervour of the revolutionary nor the zeal of the radical. His whole career is that of a moderate Liberal, in the main conservative in its tendencies, and individualistic in its spirit.

His English is that of the essayists and constitutionalists rather than that of the traders and economists. His English is, in fact, not at all so clear and definite when he discusses questions of

trade and finance as when he handles constitutional systems and the principles of government. In French he is as clear and luminous upon the one set of questions as upon the other. He does himself injustice when he discredits his knowledge of business. While he belongs to the school of constitutional statesmen whose chief work for many years was to evolve the constitutional structure of Canada from the loose provisions of the Act of Union, he is still hardly the inferior of any of his contemporaries in the economic school which modern industrial conditions have created. His administration is distinguished for progressive social legislation, for sympathetic recognition of the changing relationships between labour and capital, and for intelligent comprehension of the new responsibilities imposed upon governments by the capitalistic organization of modern industry. His, however, is essentially the English of the orator, and that is not the English of the economists. Hence, his presentation of commercial and financial questions is not always equal to his understanding of these subjects. In the same sense Mr. Goldwin Smith writes the English of the essayists, and he states the principles of the economists more successfully than he employs their language in handling the recognized nomenclature of trade and finance. It must always be remembered that in Parliament and upon the platform outside of Quebec, Sir Wilfrid Laurier generally finds it necessary to

speak an acquired language, and notwithstanding his superb mastery of English speech, still labours under some disadvantages from which those who speak English as their mother tongue are exempt.

It has never been the habit of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to write his speeches. Indeed he has been known to say that he never reads his speeches after they are delivered. Still his greater speeches are the product of much labour and long mental concentration upon the subject in hand. He thinks out every detail of his argument, collects and marshals his evidence with skill and patience, covers the ground again and again in his mental processes, and thoroughly settles the spirit and method, if not the exact language, of his argument. He is thus released from dependence upon manuscript and what he loses in diffusiveness he gains in freedom of gesture, and expression, in dramatic pose, in spontaneity, in truer identity with the mood of his audience, and in clearer perception of the immediate effects of his reasoning. It is to this freshness and freedom that he owes in some measure his extraordinary mastery of popular audiences, so readily overcomes untoward incidents, and turns to advantage hostile interruptions and unexpected developments. He prefers to address the House of Commons where sober reason and conservative argument rather than appeal to sentiments and emotions are the essentials of successful speaking. He is, however, equally effective on the platform where his

simple sincerity and picturesque personality so tremendously reinforce his nervous eloquence and logical presentation of facts and conclusions. His is essentially a constructive mind and a serene temperament. He trusts in the future and reverences the past. He will always be slow to lay destructive hands upon hallowed institutions and reluctant to disturb the ancient landmarks. His administration has been eminently constructive and progressive. He labours with strenuous hand and abounding faith to unify and consolidate the various elements of the Confederation, to promote material development, and establish national self-confidence. All his heart, and all his creed, and all his hope he put into his inspiring message to the Acadians of Nova Scotia. "Thank Providence," he said, "that we live in a country of absolute freedom and liberty. Let us always bear in mind our duties, for duty is always inherent in right. Our fathers had to labour to secure these rights. Now let us fulfil our part. Three years ago, when visiting England at the Queen's Jubilee, I had the privilege of visiting one of those marvels of Gothic architecture which the hand of genius, guided by an unerring faith, had made a harmonious whole, in which granite, marble, oak and other materials were blended. This cathedral is the image of the nation that I hope to see Canada become. As long as I live, as long as I have the power to labour in the service of my country, I shall repel the idea

of changing the nature of its different elements. I want the marble to remain the marble; I want the granite to remain the granite; I want the oak to remain the oak; I want the sturdy Scotchman to remain the Scotchman; I want the brainy Englishman to remain the Englishman; I want the warm-hearted Irishman to remain the Irishman; I want to take all these elements and build a nation that will be foremost amongst the great powers of the world."[1]

[1] Speech at Arichat, N.S., August 15th, 1900.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE famous speech which Sir Wilfrid Laurier delivered in Quebec upon the subject of "Political Liberalism" is reproduced below in the original French, with the interesting comment which appeared in *L'Événement* on that occasion. The importance of the event is sufficiently emphasized in Chapter XII of this work. The speech, in its dignity of thought and purity of expression, deserves to rank as a classic.

JAMAIS, depuis les grands triomphes oratoires de M. Papineau, on n'avait vu un pareil auditoire, un public aussi intelligent, aussi cultivé et éclairé, se précipiter au devant d'un orateur venant lui parler de libertés politiques et lui exposer la vraie théorie du régime constitutionnel, ce régime aux progrés successifs, mûrement élaborés, lents et sûrs, expression raisonnée, ferme et pacifique de la marche d'un peuple vers des destinées meilleures.

Depuis de longues, oui, de bien longues années, nous avions perdu l'habitude d'entendre un homme public parler d'autres choses que de ses adversaires, des mérites de son parti, des crimes de ceux qui lui font opposition, des mille petites chicanes qui sont la monnaie courante des discoureurs. Il nous manquait la théorie, le sens des principes constitutionnels, la thèse qui établit, qui démontre et qui élucide.

En un seul jour M. Laurier s'est placé à la hauteur de l'homme d'état et nous a ramenés aux notions saines et viriles qui, d'âge en âge se développant, ont fait du régime constitutionnel le modèle de tous les gouvernements.

L'auditoire semblait avoir été choisi, tant il y avait de notabilités de tout genre se pressant, se disputant une place pour entendre le chef désormais accrédité des libéraux canadiens, pressentant l'immense portée de ses paroles et toutes prêtes à les recueillir comme la formule éloquente, comme le code précis, net et lumineux de nos institutions.

On était venu de toutes parts, de tous les districts environnants, et jusque de St. Hyacinthe et de Montréal, pour assister à cette fête unique dont le spectacle a été aussi imposant qu'instructif. Les premiers hommes du pays, appartenant à la magistrature, au barreau, à toutes les professions libérales, au commerce, à l'industrie, aux métiers,—car il n'y avait pas d'exceptions pour ce que l'on considérait comme une grande démonstration nationale—s'étaient donné rendez-vous pour encombrer la salle où M. Laurier faisait sa conférence et pour mêler leurs applaudissements, sans distinction d'opinions, de partis, ou de tendances.

Il y avait plus de deux mille personnes rassemblées dans une salle qui en contient à peine douze cents dans les occasions les plus chères au public; les gardiens des portes, envahis par un flot montant et grossissant sans cesse, avaient renoncé à recevoir les billets d'entrée; la foule était trop nombreuse et trop avide pour attendre; on ne pouvait pas la contenir ni la soumettre aux réglements ordinaires, il a fallu de bonne heure lui laisser libre cours et lui abandonner toutes les issues; la grande porte

centrale elle-même, toujours fermée, même dans les plus attrayantes circonstances, et qui ne mesure pas moins de vingt pieds de largeur, avait dû être laissée toute grande ouverte, et les gradins, qui mènent de cette porte au plancher de la salle, étaient littéralement inondés d'auditeurs qui se prêtaient appui pour tenir le plus profond silence, afin de ne rien perdre des paroles qu'ils venaient entendre.

Il y avait quelque chose de magnifique dans le spectacle de cette foule attentive et en même temps enthousiaste, qui voulait applaudir à chaque phrase de l'orateur et qui se contenait malgré elle, pour ne rien perdre de ce qu'il lui disait, de ce qu'il lui démontrait; car le discours de M. Laurier a été une démonstration en même temps qu'une harangue; il a été une exposition éclatante et vivante de ce que sont les véritables principes libéraux, si méconnus, si dénaturés, si calomniés, et que l'on veut assimiler en vain aux élucubrations funestes du libéralisme européen.

On peut dire que ce discours ouvre une ère nouvelle dans notre politique. Il l'affranchit des coteries, de toutes les misérables petitesses qui constituent l'aliment quotidien des partis qui se disputent sur des riens ou pour des satisfactions passagères; le libéralisme, envisagé à ce point de vue, devient une grande et féconde thèse qui le débarrasse des accusations vexatoires, et lui rend son action salutaire en même temps qu'il l'élève à la hauteur d'une théorie sociale.

L'événement du 26 juin est pour nous surtout, Canadiens Français, un sujet d'orgueil et de superbe encouragement. On nous a crus jusqu'ici impropres à la vie parlementaire, et l'on a eu trop souvent

raison, tant notre éducation est peu de nature à nous donner le tempérament nécessaire, tant notre conduite dans les circonstances politiques trahit cette lacune de l'éducation, et tant notre presse, presque uniquement occupée de querelles secondaires où les personnes sont seules en cause, semble en avoir peu l'intelligence.—Mais il ne faut pas confondre une certaine inexpérience avec de l'inaptitude, et les Canadiens Français ont démontré, dans la soirée désormais mémorable du 26 juin, qu'ils pouvaient, tout aussi bien que leurs concitoyens d'origine anglaise, comprendre le jeu et saisir la portée des institutions représentatives, lorsqu'ils leur sont exposés avec la clarté, la méthode lumineuse, l'argumentation calme autant qu'éloquente, en un mot avec le sens exact qu'a déployés M. Laurier dans tout le cours de sa conférence.

Cette conférence n'a pas été une simple plaidoierie en faveur d'un parti politique, comme on pouvait s'y attendre en toute justice, elle a été une définition des choses, des choses depuis si longtemps oubliées pour les mots, et nous a ramenés par l'histoire, par l'exemple des libéraux de la Grande-Bretagne, et par l'aperçu de la marche progressive des institutions, au sentiment des principes, guides indispensables dont nous contemplons tristement le naufrage de plus en plus profond dans les chicanes journalières de la vie publique.

C'est de la reconnaissance que ses compatriotes doivent maintenant à M. Laurier, après l'hommage éclatant qu'ils lui ont rendu. Ils lui devront d'avoir soulagé la conscience populaire des accablantes doctrines qu'on veut lui imposer, et qui sont la négation absolue de tout principe constitutionnel; ils lui devront d'avoir ouvert une voie et montré la

route à suivre, bienfait inestimable pour un peuple égaré dans toute espèce de brouillards, en proie à toutes les incertitudes ; ils lui devront enfin de les avoir rendus au sain amour du libéralisme, ce glorieux et immortel penchant qui a été le salut des peuples et auquel ses adversaires ont rendu hommage, dans tous les âges, par la concession des réformes nécessaires et par la reconnaissance de droits populaires, longtemps combattus et désormais inaliénables.

C'est donc une sorte d'apostolat dont M. Laurier a jeté les premières semences dans la soirée du 26 juin. A nous d'en suivre avec un soin jaloux les développements et de les recueillir au temps de la moisson. A nous de marcher sans crainte et sans hésitation, "le front haut," comme dit l'orateur libéral, et avec l'orgueil de nos principes. Nous savons où nous allons désormais ; nous n'allons pas aux cataclysmes révolutionnaires ; le libéralisme est dégagé de ses aspects farouches, de son caractère anti-social et anti-religieux, et il ne garde plus que sa physionomie véritable, celle de l'amour des libertés légitimes et nécessaires, des libertés progressives, qui résultent des conditions naturelles du progrès, et non des brusques poussées en avant que veulent imprimer des esprits dangereux.

Voilà la physionomie qu'a le libéralisme canadien, celle que M. Laurier a indiquée, et celle que nous devrons à l'avenir savoir lui conserver.

APPENDIX

Quebec, 10 juin 1877.

A M. Wilfrid Laurier, M.P.,
Arthabaskaville

Monsieur

J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que les membres du Club Canadien de Québec, club fondé dans un but d'instruction politique, ont décidé, à l'une de leurs séances, de vous prier de faire une conférence publique à Québec sur le "Libéralisme politique."

Nous vivons dans un temps où les partis politiques se font une guerre acharnée, guerre de personnalités le plus souvent. Aussi les membres du Club Canadien ont-ils cru qu'il serait opportun, dans l'intérêt du pays et du parti libéral, de vous inviter à jeter une nouvelle lumière sur les principes qui dirigent ce parti et le but que ses chefs ont en vue.

Espérant que vous répondrez favorablement à la demande des membres du Club Canadien dont je suis l'interprète,

J'ai l'honneur d'être,
Monsieur,
Votre très-humble et très-dévoué serviteur,
ACHILLE LaRUE,
Président du "Club Canadien"

Arthabaskaville, 14 juin 1877.

M. Achille LaRue,
Président du Club Canadien,
Québec

Monsieur

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de votre lettre m'invitant, au nom du Club Canadien, à faire une conférence publique à Québec, sur le "Libéralisme politique."

Je me fais un devoir autant qu'un plaisir d'accepter votre invitation, et, si ce jour convient à votre Club, je fixerai dès maintenant le 26 courant, pour la date de cette conférence.

J'ai l'honneur d'être,
Monsieur,
Votre dévoué serviteur,
WILFRID LAURIER

LE LIBÉRALISME POLITIQUE

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,

MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS,

Je ne saurais cacher que j'ai accepté avec un certain sentiment de plaisir l'offre qui m'a été faite de venir exposer quelles sont les doctrines du parti libéral, et ce que comporte ce mot de "libéralisme," pour les libéraux de la province de Québec.

Je dis que ce n'est pas sans un certain sentiment de plaisir que j'ai accepté; mais j'aurais certainement refusé si je n'avais regardé qu'aux difficultés de la tâche. Cependant, si les difficultés de cette tâche sont nombreuses et délicates, d'un autre côté, je suis tellement pénétré de l'importance qu'il y a pour le parti libéral de définir nettement sa position devant l'opinion publique de la province, que cette considération a été pour moi supérieure à toutes les autres.

En effet, je ne me fais pas illusion sur la position du parti libéral dans la province de Québec, et je dis de suite qu'il y occupe une position fausse au point de vue de l'opinion publique. Je sais que, pour un grand nombre de nos compatriotes, le parti libéral est un parti composé d'hommes à doctrines perverses et à tendances dangereuses, marchant sciemment et délibérément à la révolution. Je sais que, pour une portion de nos compatriotes, le parti libéral est un parti composé d'hommes à intentions droites peut-être, mais victimes et dupes de principes par lesquels ils sont conduits inconsciemment, mais fatalement, à la révolution. Je sais enfin que pour une autre partie, non pas la moins considérable peut-être de notre peuple, le libéralisme est une

forme nouvelle du mal, une hérésie portant avec elle sa propre condamnation.

Je sais tout cela, et c'est parce que je le sais que j'ai accepté de venir devant vous. Je n'ai pas l'outrecuidance de croire que rien de ce que je pourrai dire ici ce soir, aura l'effet de dissiper aucun des préjugés qui existent aujourd'hui contre nous; ma seule ambition est d'ouvrir la voie, comptant que la voie ouverte sera suivie par d'autres, et que l'œuvre commencée sera complètement achevée; ma prétention ne va pas au delà.

Et que personne ne dise que cette manifestation est inutile ou intempestive.

Il n'est ni inutile ni intempestif de combattre les préjugés qui se dressent partout entre nous et l'opinion publique; il n'est ni inutile ni intempestif de définir nettement notre position telle qu'elle est.

Il est vrai que nous avons été assez longtemps déjà devant l'opinion publique, pour qu'elle ait eu l'occasion de nous connaître et de nous apprécier. Mais il est également vrai que si, comme tout parti politique nous avons eu nos ennemis, plus qu'aucun parti politique nous avons été attaqués. Des ennemis que nous avons, les uns nous ont systématiquement dénigrés, les autres nous ont de bonne foi calomniés. Les uns et les autres nous ont représentés comme professant des doctrines dont l effet, prévu et calculé pour certains d'entre nous, non entrevu, mais fatal pour les autres, serait le bouleversement de notre société, la révolution avec toutes ses horreurs. C'est pour répondre à ces accusations, pour définir notre position, que la démonstration de ce soir a été organisée par le *Club Canadien.*

D'après ma manière de voir, le moyen le plus efficace, le seul moyen de mettre à néant ces

accusations, de défendre nos idées et nos principes, c'est de les faire connaître. Oui, j'en suis convaincu, la seule exposition de nos principes en sera la meilleure comme la plus éloquente apologie.

Et quand nous nous serons fait connaître tels que nous sommes, quand nous aurons fait connaître nos principes tels qu'ils sont, nous aurons, je crois, obtenu un double résultat. Le premier sera d'amener à nous tous les amis de la liberté, tous ceux qui, avant comme après 1837, ont travaillé pour nous obtenir le gouvernement responsable, le gouvernement du peuple par le peuple, et qui, cette forme de gouvernement établie, se sont éloignés de nous, par crainte que nous ne fûssions ce que l'on nous représentait, par crainte que la réalisation des idées qu'on nous attribuait, n'amenât la destruction du gouvernement qu'ils avaient eu tant de peine à établir. Le second résultat sera de forcer nos ennemis véritables, tous ceux qui au fond sont des ennemis plus ou moins déguisés de la liberté, non plus à en appeler contre nous aux préjugés et à la peur, mais à se présenter franchement comme nous devant le peuple avec leurs idées et leurs actes.

Et quand la lutte se fera sur les pures questions de principes; quand les actes seront jugés d'après les pensées qui les inspirent, et les pensées d'après leur valeur propre; quand on ne craindra plus d'accepter ce qui est bien ou de rejeter ce qui est mal, de peur qu'en acceptant ce qui est bien, en rejetant ce qui est mal, on ne rende trop fort un parti à doctrines perverses et à tendances dangereuses, il m'importe peu de quel côté sera alors la victoire. Quand je dis qu'il m'importe peu de quel côté sera la victoire, je n'entends pas dire que je suis indifférent au résultat de la lutte. Je veux dire ceci ; si

la lutte tourne contre nous, l'opinion exprimée sera la libre expression du peuple ; mais j'en ai la conviction, un jour viendra où nos idées, jetées en terre, germeront et porteront leurs fruits, si la semence en est saine et juste.

Oui, j'en ai la confiance, j'en ai la certitude, si nos idées sont justes comme je le crois, si nos idées sont une émanation du vrai éternel et immuable, comme je le crois, elles ne périront pas ; elles peuvent être rejetées, honnies, persécutées, mais un jour viendra où on les verra germer, lever et grandir, lorsque le soleil aura fait son œuvre, et suffisamment préparé le terrain.

J'ai déjà signalé quelques-unes des accusations que l'on fait circuler contre nous, je reviendrai encore sur ce sujet, car c'est là le point le plus important. Toutes les accusations portées contre nous, toutes les objections à nos doctrines, peuvent se résumer dans les propositions suivantes ; 1o. le libéralisme est une forme nouvelle de l'erreur, une hérésie déjà virtuellement condamnée par le chef de l'église; 2o. un catholique ne peut pas être libéral.

Voilà ce que proclament nos adversaires.

M. le président, tous ceux qui me font en ce moment l'honneur de m'écouter me rendront cette justice que je pose la question telle qu'elle est, et que je n'exagère rien. Tous me rendront cette justice que je reproduis fidèlement les reproches qui nous sont tous les jours adressés. Tous admettront que c'est bien là le langage de la presse conservatrice.

Je sais que le libéralisme catholique a été condamné par le chef de l'église. On me demandera : qu'est-ce que le libéralisme catholique ? Sur le

seuil de cette question, je m'arrête. Cette question n'entre pas dans le cadre de mon sujet; au surplus, elle n'est pas de ma compétence. Mais je sais et je dis que le libéralisme catholique n'est pas le libéralisme politique. S'il était vrai que les censures ecclésiastiques portées contre le libéralisme catholique, dussent s'appliquer au libéralisme politique, ce fait constituerait pour nous, Français d'origine, catholiques de religion, un état de choses dont les conséquences seraient aussi étranges que douloureuses.

En effet, nous Canadiens Français, nous sommes une race conquise. C'est une vérité triste à dire, mais enfin c'est la vérité. Mais si nous sommes une race conquise, nous avons aussi fait une conquête: la conquête de la liberté. Nous sommes un peuple libre ; nous sommes une minorité, mais tous nos droits, tous nos priviléges nous sont conservés. Or, quelle est la cause qui nous vaut cette liberté? C'est la constitution qui nous a été conquise par nos pères, et dont nous jouissons aujourd'hui. Nous avons une constitution qui place le gouvernement dans le suffrage des citoyens; nous avons une constitution qui nous a été octroyée pour notre propre protection. Nous n'avons pas plus de droits, nous n'avons pas plus de priviléges, mais nous avons autant de droits, autant de priviléges que les autres populations qui composent avec nous la famille canadienne. Or, il ne faut pas oublier que les autres membres de la famille canadienne sont partagés en deux partis : le parti libéral et le parti conservateur.

Maintenant, si nous qui sommes catholiques, nous n'avions pas le droit d'avoir nos préférences, si nous n'avions pas le droit d'appartenir au parti libéral, il

arriverait de deux choses l'une : ou nous serions obligés de nous abstenir complètement de prendre part à la direction des affaires de l'état, et, alors, la constitution, cette constitution qui nous a été octroyée pour nous protéger—ne serait plus entre nos mains qu'une lettre morte ; ou nous serions obligés de prendre part à la direction des affaires de l'état sous la direction et au profit du parti conservateur, et alors, notre action n'étant plus libre, la constitution ne serait encore entre nos mains qu'une lettre morte, et nous aurions par surcroît l'ignominie de n'être plus, pour ceux des autres membres de la famille canadienne qui composent le parti conservateur, que des instruments et des comparses.

Ces conséquences absurdes, mais dont personne ne pourrait contester la rigoureuse exactitude, ne montrent-elles pas jusqu'à l'évidence à quel point est fausse l'assertion qu'un catholique ne saurait appartenir au parti libéral ?

Puisque la Providence a réuni sur ce coin de terre des populations différentes d'origine et de religion, n'est-il pas manifeste que ces populations doivent avoir ensemble des intérêts communs et identiques, et que, sur tout ce qui touche à ses intérêts, chacun est libre de suivre soit le parti libéral, soit le parti conservateur, suivant que sa conscience lui dicte de suivre l'un ou l'autre parti ?

Pour moi, j'appartiens au parti libéral. Si c'est un tort d'être libéral, j'accepte qu'on me le reproche ; si c'est un crime d'être libéral, ce crime, j'en suis coupable. Pour moi, je ne demande qu'une chose, c'est que nous soyons jugés d'après nos principes. J'aurais honte de nos principes, si nous n'osions pas les exprimer ; notre cause ne vaudrait pas nos efforts pour la faire triompher, si le meilleur moyen de la

faire triompher était d'en cacher la nature. Le parti libéral a été vingt-cinq ans dans l'opposition. Qu'il y soit encore vingt-cinq ans, si le peuple n'est pas encore arrivé à accepter ces idées, mais qu'il marche le front haut, bannières déployées, à la face du pays !

Il importe cependant avant tout de s'entendre sur la signification, la valeur et la portée de ce mot " libéral," et de cet autre mot " conservateur."

J'affirme qu'il n'est pas une chose si peu connue en ce pays par ceux qui l'attaquent, que le libéralisme. Il y a plusieurs raisons à cela.

Nous n'avons été initiés que d'hier aux institutions représentatives. La population anglaise comprend le jeu de ces institutions, en quelque sorte d'instinct, en outre par suite d'une expérience séculaire. Notre population, au contraire, ne les connaît guère encore. L'éducation ne fait que de commencer à se répandre parmi nous, et pour ceux qui sont instruits, notre éducation française nous conduit naturellement à étudier l'histoire de la liberté moderne, non pas dans la terre classique de la liberté, non pas dans l'histoire de la vieille Angleterre, mais chez les peuples du continent européen, chez les peuples de même origine et de même religion que nous. Et là, malheureusement, l'histoire de la liberté est écrite en caractères de sang, dans les pages les plus navrantes que contiennent peut-être les annales du genre humain. Dans toutes les classes de la société instruite, on peut voir, effrayées par ces pages lugubres, des âmes loyales qui regardent avec terreur l'esprit de liberté, s'imaginant que l'esprit de liberté doit produire ici les mêmes désastres, les mêmes crimes que dans les pays dont je parle. Pour ces esprits de bonne foi, le seul mot de libéralisme est gros de calamités nationales.

Sans blâmer tout-à-fait ces craintes, mais sans nous en laisser effrayer, remontons jusqu'à la source même, et examinons avec calme ce qui se trouve au fond de ces deux mots: *libéral, conservateur.* Quelle idée cache ce mot de *libéral* qui nous a valu tant d'anathèmes? Quelle idée cache ce mot de *conservateur*, qui semble tellement consacré qu'on l'applique modestement à tout ce qui est bien? L'un est-il, comme on le prétend, comme de fait on l'affirme tous les jours, l'expression d'une forme nouvelle de l'erreur? L'autre est-il comme on semble constamment l'insinuer, la définition du bien sous tous ses aspects? L'un est-il la révolte, l'anarchie, le désordre? L'autre est-il le seul principe stable de la société? Voilà des questions qu'on se pose tous les jours dans notre pays. Ces distinctions subtiles, que l'on retrouve sans cesse dans notre presse, ne sont cependant pas nouvelles. Elles ne sont que la répétition des rêveries de quelques publicistes de France, qui, renfermés dans leur cabinet, ne voient que le passé et critiquent amèrement tout ce qui existe aujourd'hui, pour la raison que ce qui existe aujourd'hui ne ressemble à rien de ce qui a existé autrefois.

Ceux-là disent que l'idée libérale est une idée nouvelle, et ceux-là se trompent. L'idée libérale, non plus que l'idée contraire, n'est pas une idée nouvelle; c'est une idée vieille comme le monde, que l'on retrouve à chaque page de l'histoire du monde, mais ce n'est que de nos jours qu'on en connaît la force et les lois, et qu'on sait l'utiliser. La vapeur existait avant Fulton, mais ce n'est que depuis Fulton qu'on connaît toute l'étendue de sa puissance et qu'on sait lui faire produire ses merveilleux effets. C'est la combinaison du tube et du

piston qui est l'instrument dont on se sert pour utiliser la vapeur ; c'est la forme des gouvernements représentatifs qui a révélé au monde les deux principes libéral et conservateur, et cette forme de gouvernement est l'instrument qui leur fait rendre tous leurs effets.

Sur quelque sujet que ce soit, dans le domaine des choses humaines, le vrai ne se manifeste pas également à toutes les intelligences. Il en est dont le regard plonge plus loin dans l'inconnu, mais embrasse moins à la fois ; il en est d'autres dont le regard, s'il est moins pénétrant, aperçoit plus nettement dans la sphère où il peut s'étendre. Cette distinction primordiale explique de suite jusqu'à un certain point l'idée libérale et l'idée conservatrice. Par cette seule raison, le même objet ne sera pas vu sous le même aspect par des yeux différents ; par cette seule raison, les uns prendront une route que les autres éviteront, quand cependant les uns et les autres se proposeront d'arriver au même but. Mais il y a une raison concluante qui explique clairement la nature, la raison d'être et le pourquoi des deux différentes idées. Macaulay, dans son histoire d'Angleterre, en donne la raison d'une manière admirable de clarté. Parlant de la réunion des chambres pour la seconde session du Long Parlement, sous Charles Ier, le grand historien s'exprime ainsi :

" De ce jour date l'existence organique des deux grands partis qui, depuis, ont toujours alternativement gouverné le pays. A la vérité, la distinction qui alors devint évidente, a toujours existé. Car cette distinction a son origine dans la diversité de tempéraments, d'intelligences, d'intérêts, qu'on retrouve dans toutes les sociétés, et qu'on y retrouvera

aussi longtemps que l'esprit humain sera attiré dans des directions opposées, par le charme de l'habitude ou par le charme de la nouveauté. Cette distinction se retrouve, non pas seulement en politique, mais dans la littérature, dans les arts, dans les sciences, dans la chirurgie, dans la mécanique, dans l'agriculture, jusque dans les mathématiques. Partout il existe une classe d'hommes qui s'attachent avec amour à tout ce qui est ancien, et qui, même lorsqu'ils sont convaincus par des arguments péremptoires qu'un changement serait avantageux, n'y consentent cependant qu'avec regret et répugnance. Il se trouve aussi partout une autre classe d'hommes exubérants d'espérance, hardis dans leurs idées, allant toujours de l'avant, prompts à discerner les imperfections de tout ce qui existe, estimant peu les risques et les inconvénients qui accompagnent toujours les améliorations, et disposés à regarder tout changement comme une amélioration."

Les premiers sont les conservateurs ; les seconds sont les libéraux. Voilà le sens réel, l'explication véritable et du principe libéral et du principe conservateur. Ce sont deux attributs de notre nature. Comme le dit admirablement Macaulay, on les retrouve partout: dans les arts, dans les sciences, dans toutes les branches ouvertes à la spéculation humaine; mais c'est en politique qu'ils sont le plus apparents.

Ainsi ceux qui condamnent le libéralisme comme une idée nouvelle, n'ont pas réfléchi à ce qui se passe chaque jour sous leurs yeux. Ceux qui condamnent le libéralisme comme une erreur, n'ont pas réfléchi qu'ils s'exposaient, en le faisant, à condamner un attribut de la nature humaine.

Maintenant, il ne faut pas oublier que la forme

de notre gouvernement est celle de la monarchie représentative. C'est là l'instrument qui met en relief et en action les deux principes libéral et conservateur. On nous accuse souvent, nous libéraux, d'être des républicains. Je ne signale pas ce reproche pour le relever: le reproche ne vaut pas d'être relevé. Je dis simplement que la forme importe peu; qu'elle soit manarchique, qu'elle soit républicaine, du moment qu'un peuple a le droit de vote, du moment qu'il a un gouvernement responsable, il a la pleine mesure de la liberté. Cependant, la liberté ne serait bientôt qu'un vain mot, si elle laissait sans contrôle ceux qui ont la direction du pouvoir. Un homme, dont la sagacité étonnante a formulé les axiômes de la science gouvernementale avec une justesse qui n'a jamais erré, Junius, a dit: "*Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.*" Une vigilance éternelle est le prix de la liberté. Oui, si un peuple veut rester libre, il lui faut comme Argus avoir cent yeux, et toujours être en éveil. S'il s'endort, s'il faiblit, chaque moment d'indolence lui coûtera une parcelle de ses droits. Une vigilance éternelle, de tous les instants, c'est là le prix dont il doit payer ce bienfait inappréciable de la liberté. Or, la forme de la monarchie représentative se prête merveilleusement,—plus peut-être que la forme républicaine—à l'exercice de cette vigilance nécessaire. D'un côté, vous avez ceux qui gouvernent, et de l'autre, ceux qui surveillent. D'un côté, vous avez ceux qui sont au pouvoir et qui ont intérêt à y rester, de l'autre, vous avez ceux qui ont intérêt à y arriver eux-mêmes. Quel sera le lien de cohésion qui réunira chacun de ces différents groupes? Quel sera le principe, le sentiment qui rangera les divers éléments de la population, soit parmi ceux qui

gouvernent, soit parmi ceux qui surveillent? Ce sera ou le principe libéral, ou le principe conservateur. Vous verrez ensemble ceux qu'attire le charme de la nouveauté, et vous verrez ensemble ceux qu' attire le charme de l'habitude. Vous verrez ensemble ceux qui s'attachent à tout ce qui est ancien, et vous verrez ensemble ceux qui sont toujours disposés à réformer.

Maintenant, je le demande; entre ces deux idées qui constituent la base des partis, peut-il y avoir une différence morale? L'une est-elle radicalement bonne et l'autre radicalement mauvaise? N'est-il pas manifeste que toutes deux sont ce qu'on appelle en morale *indifférentes*, c'est-à-dire que toutes deux sont susceptibles d'appréciation, de pondération et de choix? Ne serait-il pas aussi injuste qu'absurde de condamner ou d'approuver, soit l'une soit l'autre, comme absolument mauvaise ou bonne?

L'une et l'autre sont susceptible de beaucoup de bien comme de beaucoup de mal. Le conservateur qui défend les vieilles institutions de son pays, peut faire beaucoup de bien, de même qu'il peut faire beaucoup de mal, s'il s'obstine à vouloir maintenir des abus devenus intolérables. Le libéral qui combat ces abus, et après de longs efforts parvient à les extirper, peut être un bienfaiteur public, de même que le libéral qui porterait une main légère sur des institutions sacrées, pourrait être un fléau non seulement pour son pays, mais pour l'humanité tout entière.

Certes, je suis loin de faire un reproche à nos adversaires de leurs convictions, mais pour moi, je l'ai déjà dit, je suis un libéral. Je suis un de ceux qui pensent que partout, dans les choses humaines, il y a des abus à réformer, de nouveaux horizons à ouvrir, de nouvelles forces à développer.

Du reste, le libéralisme me paraît de tous points supérieur à l'autre principe. Le principe du libéralisme réside dans l'essence même de notre nature, dans cette soif de bonheur que nous apportons avec nous dans la vie, qui nous suit partout, pour n'être cependant jamais complètement assouvie de ce côté-ci de la tombe. Notre âme est immortelle, mais nos moyens sont bornés. Nous gravitons sans cesse vers un idéal que nous n'atteignons jamais. Nous rêvons le bien, nous n'atteignons jamais que le mieux. A peine sommes-nous arrivés au terme que nous nous étions assignés, que nous y découvrons des horizons que nous n'avions pas même soupçonnés. Nous nous y précipitons, et ces horizons, explorés à leur tour, nous en découvrent d'autres qui nous entraînent encore et toujours plus loin.

Ainsi en sera-t-il tant que l'homme sera ce qu'il est ; tant que l'âme immortelle habitera le corps mortel ; ses désirs seront toujours plus vastes que ses moyens, ses actions n'arriveront jamais à la hauteur de ses conceptions. Il est le véritable Sysiphe de la fable ; son œuvre toujours finie est toujours à recommencer.

Cette condition de notre nature est précisément ce qui fait la grandeur de l'homme ; car elle le condamne fatalement au mouvement, au progrès ; nos moyens sont bornés, mais notre nature est perfectible, et nous avons l'infini pour champ de course. Ainsi il y a toujours place pour l'amélioration de notre condition, pour le perfectionnement de notre nature, et pour l'accession d'un plus grand nombre à une vie plus facile. Voilà encore ce qui, à mes yeux, constitue la supériorité du libéralisme.

En outre, l'expérience constate qu'insensiblement,

imperceptiblement, il se glissera dans le corps social des abus qui finiront par entraver sérieusement son ascension progressive, peut-être par mettre son existence en danger.

L'expérience constate encore que des institutions qui, au début, auront été utiles, parce qu'elles étaient appropriées à l'état de société où elles avaient été introduites, finiront par devenir, par le fait seul que tout changera autour d'elles, d'intolérables abus. Telle a été parmi nous la tenure seigneuriale. Il est incontestable qu'aux débuts de la colonie, ce système avait singulièrement facilité l'établissement du sol. Mais en 1850, tout avait tellement changé parmi nous que ce système aurait fini par produire des complications déplorables, si notre assemblée, sur l'initiative des libéraux, n'avait eu la sagesse de l'abolir.

Comme conséquence de cette loi que j'ai indiquée comme la cause déterminante des idées libérale et conservatrice, il se trouvera toujours des hommes qui s'attacheront avec amour à ces abus, qui les défendront à outrance, et qui verront avec terreur toute tentative d'y porter la main. Malheur à ces hommes, s'ils se trouvent avoir le pouvoir, et s'ils ne savent pas faire le sacrifice de leurs préférences ! Malheur à ces hommes, s'ils ne savent pas céder et adopter les réformes proposées ! Ils attireront sur leur pays des commotions d'autant plus terribles que justice aura été refusée plus longtemps. L'histoire, hélas ! constate surabondamment que bien peu de ceux qui gouvernent ont su comprendre ces aspirations de l'humanité et y faire droit. Il y a eu plus de révolutions causées par l'obstination des conservateurs que par les exagérations des libéraux.

L'art suprême de gouverner est de guider et

diriger, en les contrôlant, ces aspirations de l'humanité. Les Anglais possèdent cet art au suprême degré. Aussi voyez l'œuvre du grand parti libéral anglais. Que de réformes il a opérées, que d'abus il a fait disparaître, sans secousse, sans perturbation, sans violence! Il a compris les aspirations des opprimés, il a compris les besoins nouveaux créés par des situations nouvelles, et, sous l'autorité de la loi, et sans autre instrument que la loi, il a opéré une série de réformes qui ont fait du peuple anglais le peuple le plus libre, le plus prospère et le plus heureux de l'Europe.

Voyez au contraire les gouvernements du continent. La plupart n'ont jamais su comprendre les aspirations de leurs peuples. Quand les malheureux relevaient la tête, pour faire arriver jusqu'à leurs poumons quelques souffles d'air et de liberté, ils ont été brutalement repoussés dans un cercle toujours de plus en plus hermétiquement resserré.

Mais, un jour est venu où les obstacles ont volé en éclats, où ces peuples se sont rués hors des machines qui les paralysaient, et, alors, sous le nom sacré de la liberté, on a vu s'accomplir les plus effroyables crimes. Faut-il s'en étonner ?

S'étonne-t-on quand les nuages, amoncelés sur notre tête, éclatent en grêle et en foudre ? S'étonne-t-on quand la vapeur fait voler en éclats les parois qui la retenaient captive, parce que le mécanicien n'a pas eu la prudence de lever la soupape qui doit la dégager de l'exubérance de sa propre force ? Non, il y a là une loi fatale, qui aura toujours le même effet, dans l'ordre moral, comme dans l'ordre physique. Partout où il y a compression, il y aura explosion, violences et ruines. Je ne dis pas cela pour excuser les révolutions ; je hais les révolutions ; je

déteste toute tentative de vouloir faire triompher ses opinions par la violence. Au surplus, je suis moins disposé à en faire retomber la responsabilité sur ceux qui les font que sur ceux qui les provoquent par leur aveugle obstination. Je dis cela pour expliquer la supériorité du libéralisme qui, comprenant les aspirations de la nature humaine, au lieu de les violenter, tâche de les diriger.

Croyez-vous par exemple que si l'Angleterre avait persisté à refuser aux catholiques leur émancipation ; si elle avait persisté à refuser aux catholiques, aux juifs, et aux dénominations protestantes qui ne font pas partie de l'église établie, la plénitude des droits civils et politiques ; si ella avait persisté à conserver le suffrage restreint au petit nombre ; si elle avait persisté à refuser le libre commerce des céréales ; si elle avait persisté à refuser le droit de suffrage aux classes ouvrières, pensez-vous qu'un jour ne serait pas venu où le peuple se fût levé en armes, pour se faire à lui-même cette justice qui lui aurait été obstinément refusée ? Pensez-vous que le lion hideux de l'émeute n'aurait pas grondé sous les fenêtres de Westminster, et que le sang de la guerre civile n'aurait pas ensanglanté les rues de Londres, comme il a tant de fois ensanglanté les rues de Paris ? La nature humaine est partout la même, et là, comme ailleurs, la compression aurait produit explosion, violences et ruines. Ces calamités terribles ont éte évitées, grâce à l'initiative des libéraux qui, comprenant le mal, ont proposé et appliqué le remède.

Qu'y a-t-il de plus beau que l'histoire du grand parti libéral anglais dans ce siècle ? Au début, c'est Fox, le sage, le généreux Fox, défendant la cause des opprimés, partout où il y a des opprimés. Un peu plus tard, c'est O'Connell, le grand O'Connell,

revendiquant et obtenant pour ces coreligionnaires les droits et les priviléges de sujets anglais. Il est assisté dans cette œuvre par tous les libéraux des trois royaumes, Grey, Brougham, Russell, Jeffrey et une foule d'autres. Puis viennent successivement l'abolition de l'oligarchie gouvernementale, le rappel des lois prohibant le commerce des céréales, l'extension du suffrage aux classes ouvrières, et enfin, pour couronner le tout, l'abolition de l'église d'Angleterre comme religion d'état en Irlande. Et remarquez-le bien, les libéraux qui opèrent ces réformes successives, ne sont pas recrutés seulement dans les classes moyennes, mais quelques-uns de leurs chefs les plus illustres sont recrutés dans la pairie d'Angleterre. Je ne sache pas de spectacle qui fasse plus d'honneur à l'humanité, que le spectacle de ces pairs d'Angleterre, de ces nobles, de ces riches, de ces puissants, combattant opiniâtrément pour déraciner une foule d'abus séculaires, sacrifiant leurs priviléges avec une calme enthousiasme pour rendre la vie plus facile et plus heureuse à un plus grand nombre. A ce sujet, laissez-moi vous citer une lettre de Macaulay à un de ses amis, écrite au lendemain du vote sur le fameux bill de réforme, qui mit fin au système des *bourgs pourris*. Cette lettre, suivant moi, fait voir admirablement ce que c'est qu'un libéral anglais. La voici. Je demande pardon de faire cette citation, parce qu'elle est un peu longue :

"Je ne reverrai jamais, je ne m'attends pas à jamais revoir une scène semblable à la *division (division)* de mardi dernier. Si je devais vivre cinquante ans, l'impression m'en resterait aussi fraîche et aussi vive que si elle venait d'avoir lieu. Cela doit être comme d'avoir vu César poignardé dans le sénat, ou Cromwell enlevant la *masse (mace)* de sur

la table du Parlement; une scène qu'on voit une fois et qu'on n'oublie jamais. La foule débordait de la chambre de toutes parts. Quand les étrangers eurent reçu l'ordre de se retirer et que les portes eurent été fermées, nous étions six cent huit membres présents, cinquante-cinq de plus qu'on n'en avait jamais vus dans aucune autre division précédente. Les *oui* et les *non* furent comme deux volées de canon, tirées des deux côtés opposés d'un champ de bataille. Lorsque l'opposition se fut retirée dans le corridor *(lobby)*, opération qui dura plus de vingt minutes, nous nous répandîmes sur les banquettes des deux côtés de la chambre; car il y en avait plusieurs parmi nous qui n'avaient pas pu trouver de siège pendant la soirée. Quand les portes eurent été fermées, nous commençâmes à faire des calculs sur notre nombre. Tout le monde était découragé. 'Nous sommes battus, nous ne sommes au plus que 'deux cent quatre-vingts. Je ne pense pas que nous 'soyons même deux cent cinquante. L'échevin 'Thompson les a comptés. Il dit qu'ils sont deux 'cent quatre-vingt-dix-neuf' Voilà ce qui se disait parmi nous. La chambre, lorsque les ministériels seuls s'y trouvaient, était déjà très remplie, plus même qu'elle ne l'est généralement dans les débats d'un intérêt considérable. Cependant je n'avais pas d'espérance que nous fussions trois cents. Comme les scrutateurs *(tellers)* passaient le long de la plus basse rangée gauche, l'intensité de notre attention devint intolérable—deux cent quatre-vingt-onze—deux cent quatre-vingt-douze,—nous étions tous debout, le cou tendu, comptant avec les scrutateurs. A trois cents, il y eut un léger cri de joie; à trois cent deux, un autre, mais supprimé au même instant, car nous ne connaissions pas encore le nombre

des forces ennemies; nous savions cependant que si nous étions battus, la défaite ne pouvait pas être considérable. Enfin, les portes sont ouvertes, et les voici qui entrent. Chacun d'eux, comme il entrait, apportait un compte différent du nombre qu'ils étaient. En effet, pressés comme ils l'étaient dans le corridor, il était impossible de se rendre compte exactement de leur nombre. D'abord on nous dit qu'ils étaient trois cent trois, puis ce chiffre s'accrut jusqu'à trois cent dix et décrut de suite jusqu'à trois cent sept. Nous étions tous muets d'anxiété, lorsque Charles Wood qui se tenait près de la porte, saute sur un banc en criant; Ils ne sont que trois cent un. Alors nous poussons un cri qui aurait pu être entendu jusqu'à Charing Cross, nous jetons nos chapeaux en l'air, nous battons des pieds, nous nous frappons les mains.

"Les scrutateurs peuvent à peine se frayer un passage dans la foule; la chambre était remplie jusqu'à la table, et une mer de têtes s'y agitait comme dans le parterre d'un théâtre. Mais vous auriez pu entendre tomber une épingle, lorsque Duncannon lut les chiffres. Alors, de nouvelles acclamations éclatent, et plusieurs d'entre nous versent des larmes. Pour moi, je pouvais à peine retenir les miennes. Et il fallait voir la mâchoire de Peel tomber, et la figure de Twiss qui avait l'air d'un damné, et Herries qui avait l'air de Judas ôtant sa cravate pour la dernière opération. Nous nous donnons des poignées de mains, nous nous frappons dans le dos, nous sortons riant, pleurant, et poussant des hourras. Et à peine les portes sont-elles ouvertes, que d'autres acclamations répondent aux nôtres. Tous les passages, tous les escaliers, toutes les anti-chambres étaient pleins de gens qui

étaient restés là jusqu'à quatre heures du matin, pour connaître quel serait le résultat. Nous nous frayons péniblement un passage à travers deux masses compactes des gens qui crient et agitent leurs chapeaux au-dessus de leurs têtes. Enfin nous voici en plein air; j'appelle une voiture, et la première chose que le cocher me dit: 'Le bill est-il passé, monsieur?—Oui, par une voix.—Que le ciel en soit béni!'" Et Macaulay finit par une phrase qui indique bien le libéral: "Ainsi, continue-t-il, finit une scène qui n'aura probablement pas d'égale, jusqu'à ce que le parlement réformé ait lui-même besoin d'être réformé."

Celui qui écrivait ainsi, dans ces termes exhilarants, venait de voter l'abolition du système en vertu duquel il tenait son mandat. Macaulay tenait son mandat de la générosité d'un pair d'Angleterre, Lord Lansdowne, qui l'avait fait élire par le *bourg pourri* de Calne. Je connais peu de pages qui fassent plus d'honneur à l'humanité que cette simple lettre qui nous montre ces natures anglaises, calmes et opiniâtres dans la lutte, qui *s'émotionnent* enfin, pleurant et riant à la fois, parce qu'un acte de justice vient d'être accompli, parce qu'un abus vient d'être déraciné du sol de la vieille Angleterre.

Membres du *Club Canadien*, libéraux de la province de Québec, voilà quels sont nos modèles! voilà quels sont nos principes! voilà quel est notre parti!

Il est vrai qu'il existe en Europe, en France, en Italie et en Allemagne, une classe d'hommes qui se donnent le titre de libéraux, mais qui n'ont de libéral que le nom, et qui sont les plus dangereux des hommes. Ce ne sont pas des libéraux, ce sont des révolutionnaires; dans leurs principes ils sont telle-

ment exaltés qu'ils n'aspirent à rien moins qu'à la destruction de la société moderne. Avec ces hommes, nous n'avons rien de commun; mais c'est la tactique de nos adversaires de toujours nous assimiler à eux. Ces accusations sont au-dessous de nous, et la seule réponse que nous puissions faire dignement, c'est d'affirmer nos véritables principes, et de faire de telle sort que nos actes soient toujours conformes à nos principes.

Maintenant, arrivé à ce point de mon exposé, je passerai en revue l'histoire du parti libéral de notre pays. Je suis de ceux qui ne craignent pas de scruter l'histoire de mon parti. Je suis de ceux qui pensent qu'il y a plus à gagner à dire franchement la vérité, qu'à essayer de se faire illusion à soi-même et aux autres. Ayons le courage de dire la vérité ! Si notre parti a fait des fautes, nos dénégations n'empêcheront pas les choses d'avoir été ce qu'elles ont été. Du reste, si notre parti a commis des fautes, nous trouverons toujours dans l'autre parti assez de fautes pour compenser les nôtres, et au surplus, l'autre parti fût-il immaculé, nos principes n'en seraient, pour cela, ni meilleurs ni pires. Ayons le courage de dire la vérité, et que la vérité dite sur nos fautes passées nous empêche d'y retomber à l'avenir.

Jusqu'à 1848, tous les Canadiens Français n'avaient formé qu'un seul parti, le parti libéral. Le parti conservateur, ou plutôt le parti *tory*, comme on l'appelait, n'était qu'une faible minorité. C'est de 1848 que datent les premières traces des deux partis qui, depuis, se sont disputé le pouvoir. M. Lafontaine avait accepté le régime établi en 1841. Lorsque M. Papineau fut revenu de l'exil, il attaqua le nouvel ordre de choses avec sa grande éloquence et de toute la hauteur de ses idées. Je n'entreprendrai pas

ici de faire la critique de la politique respective de ces deux grands hommes. Tous deux aimèrent leur pays, ardemment, passionnément, tous deux lui dévouèrent leur vie ; tous deux, par des voies différentes, n'eurent d'autre but que de le servir; tous deux furent probes et désintéressés. Restons sur ces souvenirs, sans chercher qui des deux eut tort et qui eut raison.

Il se trouvait, à cette époque, une génération de jeunes gens d'un grand talent et d'une impétuosité de caractère plus grande encore. Désespérés d'être venus trop tard pour jouer leur tête dans les événements de '37, ils se précipitèrent, avec une alacrité aveugle, dans le mouvement politique de l'époque. Ils se trouvèrent au premier rang des partisans de M. Lafontaine, dans sa glorieuse lutte contre Lord Metcalfe. Ils l'abandonnèrent ensuite pour la politique plus avancée de M. Papineau, et, tout en se rangeant à sa suite, comme il était naturel, ils l'eurent bientôt devancé.

Enhardis par leur propre succès, entraînés par leur propre enthousiasme, ils fondèrent un journal *L'Avenir*, dans lequel ils se posèrent en réformateurs et en régénérateurs de leur pays. Non contents de s'attaquer à la situation politique, ils s'attaquèrent audacieusement à la situation sociale. Ils lancèrent un programme contenant pas moins de vingt-et-un articles, qui commençait par l'élection des juges de paix et finissait par l'annexion aux Etats-Unis, et qui n'était en somme rien autre chose qu'une révolution complète de la province. S'il eût été possible que, par un coup de baguette magique, les vingt-et-un articles de ce programme fûssent réalisés dans le cours d'une nuit, le pays au matin n'eut plus été reconnaissable. Celui qui l'aurait quitté la veille et

y serait revenu le lendemain, n'aurait pu s'y re trouver.

La seule excuse de ces libéraux, c'était leur jeunesse; le plus âgé d'entr'eux n'avait pas vingt-deux ans.

Messieurs, je constate des faits, je n'entends pas faire de reproche à qui que ce soit. Le talent et les convictions sincères ont toujours droit à notre respect. Quel est celui d'entre nous, du reste, qui, s'il eût vécu à cette époque, peut se flatter qu'il aurait été plus sage, et qu'il ne serait pas tombé dans les mêmes écarts ? Tout prêtait alors à ces exagérations : la situation de notre pays, la situation en Europe.

Le pays n'était pas encore guéri des blessures de l'insurrection ; on nous avait octroyé une constitution libre, il est vrai, mais la nouvelle constitution n'était pas appliquée de bonne foi par le bureau colonial. Il y avait, au fond de chaque âme, des grondements que comprimait seul le souvenir de la vengeance tirée de l'insurrection. De tous les côtés, du reste, arrivaient jusqu'ici des effluves de démocratie et de révolte. La société frémissait déjà aux premiers souffles de cette grande tempête qui devait éclater quelques années plus tard, presque par tout le monde civilisé, et qui fit un moment chanceler la société sur elle-même. Les années qui précèdent 1848 sont effrayantes à contempler. On éprouve de l'horreur à constater ce travail sinistre qui se faisait partout et qui jeta dans la révolte, à un moment donné, plus de quatre-vingts millions d'hommes.

Cet état de choses devait puissamment agir sur des imaginations jeunes, ardentes et inexpérimentées. Aussi, nos jeunes réformateurs, non contents de vouloir révolutionner leur pays, salu-

aient avec transport chaque révolution nouvelle en Europe.

Cependant, à peine avaient-ils fait deux pas dans la vie qu'ils s'apercevaient de leur immense erreur. Dès 1851, ils publiaient un nouveau journal. Ils abandonnaient *L'Avenir* aux énergumènes et cherchaient dans le nouveau journal *Le Pays*, sans toujours la trouver, il est vrai, la voie nouvelle que devaient suivre les amis de la liberté sous la nouvelle constitution.

On ne peut aujourd'hui, en relisant le programme de *L'Avenir*, s'empêcher de sourire ; on ne peut s'empêcher de sourire, en retrouvant avec un si grand bon sens quelquefois, tant de propositions absurdes ou impossibles. Il serait oiseux de repasser, une à une, toutes les propositions incongrues que contenait le programme de *L'Avenir*, J'en prendrai une au hasard : les parlements annuels. Je suis certain que chacun des jeunes réformateurs d'alors, qui est arrivé anjourd'hui à la députation, est fermement d'opinion qu'une élection tous les cinq ans est tout-à-fait suffisante. Et d'ailleurs, n'est-il pas manifeste que les parlements annuels seraient une entrave constante à toute législation sérieuse, et une source d'agitation en permanence ?

Cependant, le mal était fait. Le clergé, alarmé de ces allures qui ne rappelaient que trop les révolutionnaires d'Europe, déclara de suite une guerre impitoyable au nouveau parti. La population anglaise, amie de la liberté, mais amie de l'ordre, se déclara également contre le nouveau parti, et pendant vingt-cinq ans, ce parti est resté dans l'opposition, bien que l'honneur lui revienne d'avoir pris l'initiative de toutes les réformes accomplies depuis cette époque. C'est vainement qu'il demanda et obtint

l'abolition de la tenure seigneuriale ; c'est vainement qu'il demanda et obtint la décentralisation judiciaire ; c'est vainement que le premier il donna l'élan à l'œuvre de la colonisation, ces sages réformes ne lui furent pas comptées ; c'est vainement que ces enfants, devenus hommes, désavouèrent les entraînements de leur jeunesse ; c'est vainement enfin que le parti conservateur commit fautes sur fautes, la génération des libéraux de 1848 était presqu'entièrement disparue de l'arène politique, lorsque commença à poindre l'aurore d'un jour nouveau pour le parti libéral. Depuis ce temps, de nouvelles accessions ont été faites au parti ; des idées plus réfléchies, plus calmes, y ont prédominé ; quant à l'ancien programme, de toute la partie sociale, il ne reste plus rien du tout, et, de la partie politique, il ne reste que les principes du parti libéral d'Angleterre.

Pendant ce temps, que faisait l'autre parti ? Lorsque la scission entre M. Papineau et M. Lafontaine fut devenue complète, la fraction du parti libéral qui suivit M. Lafontaine, finit, après quelques tâtonnements, par s'allier aux *tories* du Haut-Canada ; alors, au titre de libéral qu'elle ne pouvait ou n'osait pas encore avouer, elle ajouta celui de conservateur. Le nouveau parti se donna le nom de libéral-conservateur. Quelques années s'écoulèrent, et de nouvelles modifications survinrent ; le nouveau parti abandonna entièrement le titre de libéral, et ne s'appela plus que le parti conservateur. Quelques années s'écoulèrent encore, de nouvelles modifications survinrent ; je ne sais plus de quel nom nous appelons ce parti. Ceux qui aujourd'hui semblent y tenir le haut du pavé, s'appelleront eux-mêmes : le parti ultramontain, le parti catholique. Ses principes se sont modifiés comme son nom. Si M. Cartier

revenait aujourd'hui sur la terre, il ne reconnaîtrait plus son parti. M. Cartier était dévoué aux principes de la constitution anglaise. Ceux qui aujourd'hui, parmi ses anciens partisans, tiennent le haut du pavé, repoussent ouvertement les principes de la constitution anglaise, comme une concession à ce qu'ils appellent l'esprit du mal. Ils ne comprennent ni leur pays, ni leur époque. Toutes leurs idées sont calquées sur celles des réactionnaires de France, comme les idées des libéraux de 1848 étaient calquées sur celles des révolutionnaires de France. Ils se passionnent pour Don Carlos et le comte de Chambord, comme les libéraux se passionnaient pour Louis Blanc et Ledru-Rollin. Ils crient: vive le roi! comme les libéraux criaient: vive la république! En parlant de Don Carlos et du comte de Chambord, ils affectent de ne jamais dire que Sa Majesté le *roy* Charles VII, Sa Majesté le *roy* Henri V, tout comme les libéraux, en parlant de Napoléon III, ne disaient jamais que M. Louis Bonaparte.

Certes, je respecte trop l'opinion de mes adversaires, pour ne leur lancer jamais aucune injure; mais je leur fais le reproche de ne comprendre ni leur époque, ni leur pays. Je les accuse de juger la situation politique de notre pays, non pas d'après ce qui s'y passe, mais d'après ce qui se passe en France. Je les accuse de vouloir introduire ici des idées dont l'application serait impossible dans notre état de société. Je les accuse de travailler laborieusement, et par malheur trop efficacement, à rabaisser la religion aux simples proportions d'un parti politique.

C'est l'habitude, dans le parti de nos adversaires de nous accuser, nous libéraux, d'irréligion. Je ne

suis pas ici pour faire parade de mes sentiments religieux, mais je déclare que j'ai trop de respect pour les croyances dans lesquelles je suis né, pour jamais les faire servir de base à une organisation politique.

Vous voulez organiser un parti catholique. Mais n'avez vous pas songé que si vous aviez le malheur de réussir, vous attireriez sur votre pays des calamités dont il est impossible de prévoir les conséquences?

Vous voulez organiser tous les catholiques comme un seul parti, sans autre lien, sans autre base que la communauté de religion, mais n'avez-vous pas réfléchi que, par le fait même, vous organisez la population protestante comme un seul parti, et qu'alors, au lieu de la paix et de l'harmonie qui existent aujourd'hui entre les divers éléments de la population canadienne, vous amenez la guerre, la guerre religieuse, la plus terrible de toutes les guerres?

Encore une fois, conservateurs, je vous accuse à la face du Canada de ne comprendre ni votre pays ni votre époque.

Nos adversaires nous font encore un reproche: ils nous reprochent d'aimer la liberté, et ils appellent l'esprit de liberté un principe dangereux et subversif.

Est-il quelque raison à ces attaques? Aucune, sinon qu'il existe en France un groupe de catholiques qui poursuivent la liberté de leurs imprécations. Certes, il n'y a pas en France que des ennemis de la liberté qui la regardent avec terreur. Les amis les plus ardents de la liberté la contemplent souvent avec le même sentiment. Rappelez-vous le dernier mot de Madame Roland. Elle avait ardemment aimé la liberté, elle l'avait appelée de

tous ses vœux, et son dernier mot est ce mot navrant: O liberté! que de crimes on commet en ton nom! Combien de fois les mêmes paroles n'ont-elles pas été répétées aussi sincèrement, par des amis aussi sincères de la liberté!

Je conçois très-bien, sans cependant les partager, les sentiments de ces Français qui, regardant ce que la liberté leur a coûté de larmes, de ruines et de sang, appellent quelquefois pour leur pays un despotisme vigoureux; je conçois leurs anathèmes; mais que ces anathèmes contre la liberté soient répétés parmi nous, c'est ce que je ne saurais comprendre.

Eh quoi! c'est nous, race conquise, qui irions maudire la liberté! Mais que serions-nous donc sans la liberté? Que serions-nous maintenant, si nos pères avaient eu les mêmes sentiments que les conservateurs d'aujourd'hui? Serions-nous autre chose qu'une race de parias?

J'avoue bien que la liberté, telle qu'elle a été généralement comprise et pratiquée en France, n'a rien de séduisant. Les Français ont eu le nom de la liberté, ils n'ont pas encore eu la liberté. Un de leurs poètes, Auguste Barbier, nous a donné une idée assez exacte de la liberté qui a quelquefois passé en France, et qu'on a vue pour la dernière fois à l'œuvre en 1871. Il la représente comme une femme

"A la voix rauque, aux durs appas
"Qui du brun sur la peau, du feu dans les prunelles
"Agile et marchant à grands pas,
"Se plaît aux cris du peuple, aux sanglantes mêlées
"Aux longs roulements des tambours,
"A l'odeur de la poudre, aux lointaines volées
"Des cloches et des canons sourds;
"Qui ne prend ses amours que dans la populace,
"Et ne prête son large flanc
"Qu'à des gens forts comme elle, et qui veut qu'on l'embrasse
"Avec des bras rouges de sang.

Si la liberté était bien cette virago sinistre, je comprendrais les anathèmes de nos adversaires, et je serais le premier à m'y associer. Mais ce n'est pas là la liberté. Un poète anglais, Tennyson, a chanté la liberté, la liberté de son pays et du nôtre. Dans son poème *You Ask Me Why*, Tennyson s'adresse à un ami qui lui demande, pourquoi il ne va pas chercher dans les îles des mers du sud, un climat plus doux, et pourquoi, malgré sa santé altérée, il persiste à rester sous le ciel brumeux de l'Angleterre. Et le poète lui répond :

"It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land where, girt with friends or foes,
A man may speak the thing he will;

"A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down,
From precedent to precedent:

"Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread."

Le poète répond à son ami, qu'il ne veut pas s'éloigner de l'Angleterre, parce que :

" C'est la terre des hommes libres, c'est la terre choisie par la liberté calme et modérée, où, qu'il soit environné d'amis ou d'ennemis, un homme peut dire ce qu'il veut dire.

" Une terre d'un gouvernement stable, une terre d'un juste et antique renom, où la liberté s'épand lentement de précédent en précédent.

" Où les factions lèvent rarement la tête, où la force de toute pensée féconde, s'élevant par degrés jusqu'à la maturité, a le temps et l'espace pour se développer."

Telle est la liberté dont nous jouissons, telle est la liberté que nous défendons et que nos adversaires attaquent sans la comprendre, et tout en en possédant les bienfaits. Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, dans une de ses odes, parle de peuplades barbares qui, un jour, dans un moment d'inconcevable folie, se mirent à insulter le soleil de leurs cris et de leurs imprécations. Le poète caractérise d'un mot cette inepte impiété :

> Le Dieu poursuivant sa carrière,
> Versait des torrents de lumière
> Sur ses obscurs blasphémateurs.

Ainsi en est-il parmi nous de ceux qui attaquent la liberté. La liberté les couvre, les inonde, les protége et les défend jusque dans leurs imprécations.

> Le Dieu poursuivant sa carrière,
> Versait des torrents de lumière
> Sur ces obscurs blasphémateurs.

Mais nos adversaires, tout en nous reprochant d'être les amis de la liberté, nous reprochent encore, par une inconséquence qui serait très grave, si l'accusation était fondée—de refuser à l'église la liberté à laquelle elle a droit. Ils nous reprochent de vouloir fermer la bouche au corps administratif de l'église, au clergé, de vouloir l'empêcher d'enseigner au peuple ses devoirs de citoyen et d'électeur. Ils nous reprochent, pour me servir de la phrase consacrée, de vouloir empêcher le clergé de se mêler de politique et de le reléguer dans la sacristie.

Au nom du parti libéral, au nom des principes libéraux, je repousse cette assertion!

Je dis qu'il n'y a pas un seul libéral canadien qui veuille empêcher le clergé de prendre part aux affaires politiques, si le clergé veut prendre part aux affaires politiques.

Au nom de quel principe les amis de la liberté voudraient-ils refuser au prêtre le droit de prendre part aux affaires politiques? Au nom de quel principe les amis de la liberté voudraient-ils refuser au prêtre le droit d'avoir des opinions politiques et de les exprimer, le droit d'approuver ou de désapprouver les hommes publics et leurs actes, et d'enseigner au peuple ce qu'il croit être son devoir? Au nom de quel principe le prêtre n'aurait-il pas le droit de dire que si je suis élu, moi, la religion est menacée, lorsque j'ai le droit, moi, de dire que si mon adversaire est élu, l'état est en danger? Pourquoi le prêtre n'aurait-il pas le droit de dire que si je suis élu, la religion va être infailliblement détruite, lorsque j'ai le droit de dire que si mon adversaire est élu, l'état s'en va droit à la banqueroute? Non, que le prêtre parle et prêche comme il l'entend, c'est son droit. Jamais ce droit ne lui sera contesté par un libéral canadien.

La constitution que nous avons invite tous les citoyens à prendre part à la direction des affaires de l'état; elle ne fait d'exception pour personne. Chacun a le droit, non-seulement d'exprimer son opinion, mais d'influencer, s'il le peut, par l'expression de son opinion, l'opinion de ses concitoyens. Ce droit-là existe pour tous; il ne peut y avoir de raison pour que le prêtre en soit privé. Je suis ici pour dire toute ma pensée, et j'ajoute que je suis loin de trouver opportune l'intervention du clergé dans le domaine politique, comme elle s'est exercée depuis quelques années. Je crois au contraire que le prêtre a tout à perdre, au point de vue du respect dû à son caractére, en s'immisçant dans les questions ordinaires de la politique; cependant son droit est incontestable, et s'il croit bon de s'en servir, notre

devoir à nous, libéraux, est de le lui garantir contre toute conteste.

Cependant, ce droit n'est pas illimité. Nous n'avons pas parmi nous de droits absolus. Les droits de chaque homme, dans notre état de société, finissent à l'endroit précis où ils empiètent sur les droits d'un autre.

Le droit d'intervention en politique finit à l'endroit où il empièterait sur l'indépendance de l'électeur.

La constitution de notre pays repose sur la volonté librement exprimée de chaque électeur. La constitution entend que chaque électeur dépose son vote, librement, volontairement, comme il l'entend. Si le plus grand nombre des électeurs d'un pays sont d'une opinion actuellement, et que, par suite de l'influence exercée sur eux par un ou plusieurs hommes, par suite des paroles qu'ils auront entendues ou des écrits qu'ils auront lus, leur opinion change, il n'y a là rien que de parfaitement légitime. Bien que l'opinion qu'ils expriment soit différente de celle qu'ils auraient exprimée sans cette intervention, cependant l'opinion qu'ils expriment est bien celle qu'ils veulent exprimer, celle que est au fond de leur conscience; la constitution reçoit son entière application. Si, cependant, malgré tous les raisonnements, l'opinion des électeurs est restée la même, mais que par intimidation ou par fraude, vous les forciez à voter différemment, l'opinion qu'ils expriment n'est plus leur opinion, et la constitution est dès lors violée. La constitution, comme je l'ai déjà dit, entend que l'opinion de chacun soit librement exprimée comme il la conçoit, au moment qu'il l'exprime, et la réunion collective de chacune de ces opinions individuelles, librement exprimées, forme le gouvernement du pays.

La loie veille d'un œil si jaloux à ce que l'opinion de l'électeur soit exprimée telle qu'elle est, que si, dans un comté, l'opinion exprimée par un seul des électeurs n'est pas son opinion réelle, mais une opinion arrachée par la crainte, par la fraude ou par la corruption, l'élection devra être annulée.

Il est donc parfaitement permis de changer l'opinion de l'électeur, par le raisonnement et par tous les autres moyens de persuasion, mais jamais par l'intimidation. Au fait, la persuasion change la conviction de l'électeur, l'intimidation ne la change pas. Quand, par persuasion, vous avez changé la conviction de l'électeur, l'opinion qu'il exprime est son opinion; mais quand, par terreur, vous forcez l'électeur à voter, l'opinion qu'il exprime, c'est votre opinion; faites disparaître la cause de terreur, et alors il exprimera une autre opinion, la sienne propre.

Maintenant, on le conçoit, si l'opinion exprimée de la majorité des électeurs n'est pas leur opinion réelle, mais une opinion arrachée par fraude, par menace ou par corruption, la constitution est violée, vous n'avez pas le gouvernement de la majorité, mais le gouvernement d'une minorité. Or, si un tel état de choses se continue et se répète; si, après chaque élection, la volonté exprimée n'est pas la volonté réelle du pays, encore une fois, vous entravez la constitution, le gouvernement responsable n'est plus qu'un vain mot, et tôt ou tard, ici comme ailleurs, la compression amènera l'explosion, la violence et les ruines.

Mais il ne manquera pas de gens qui diront que le clergé a droit de dicter au peuple quels sont ses devoirs. Je réponds simplement que nous sommes ici sous le gouvernement de la Reine d'Angleterre,

sous l'autorité d'une constitution qui nous a été accordée comme un acte de justice; et que, si l'exercice des droits que vous réclamez devait avoir pour effet d'entraver cette constitution et de nous exposer à toutes les conséquences d'un pareil acte, le clergé lui-même n'en voudrait pas.

Je ne suis pas de ceux qui se donnent avec affectation comme les amis et les défenseurs du clergé. Cependant, je dis ceci: comme la plupart des jeunes gens, mes compatriotes, j'ai été élevé par des prêtres, et au milieu de jeunes gens qui sont devenus des prêtres. Je me flatte que je compte parmi eux quelques amitiés sincères, et à ceux-là du moins je puis dire, et je dis: "Voyez s'il y a sous le soleil un pays plus heureux que le nôtre; voyez s'il y a sous le soleil un pays où l'église catholique soit plus libre et plus privilégiée que celui-ci. Pourquoi donc iriez-vous, par la revendication de droits incompatibles avec notre état de société, exposer ce pays à des agitations dont les conséquences sont impossibles à prévoir!"

Mais, je m'adresse à tous mes compatriotes indistinctement, et je leur dis:

"Nous sommes un peuple heureux et libre; et nous sommes heureux et libres, grâce aux institutions libérales qui nous régissent, institutions que nous devons aux efforts de nos pères et à la sagesse de la mère-patrie.

"La politique du parti libéral est de protéger ces institutions, de les défendre et de les propager, et, sous l'empire de ces institutions, de développer les ressources latentes de notre pays. Telle est la politique du parti libéral; il n'en a pas d'autre."

Maintenant, pour apprécier toute la valeur des institutions qui nous régissent aujourd'hui, comparons

l'état actuel de notre pays avec ce qu'il était avant qu'elles nous eûssent été octroyées.

Il y a maintenant quarante ans, le pays se trouvait sous le coup d'une émotion fiévreuse, en proie à une agitation qui, quelques mois plus tard, éclatait en insurrection. La couronne britannique ne fut maintenue dans le pays que par la force de la poudre et du canon. Et cependant, que demandaient nos devanciers? Ils ne demandaient rien autre chose que les institutions que nous avons maintenant; ces institutions nous ont été octroyées, on les a appliquées loyalement; et voyez la conséquence: le drapeau britannique flotte sur la vieille citadelle de Québec, il flotte ce soir au-dessus de nos têtes, et il ne se trouve pas dans le pays un seul soldat anglais pour le défendre; sa seule défense, c'est la reconnaissance que nous lui devons pour la liberté et la sécurité que nous avons trouvées sous son ombre.

Quel est le Canadien qui, comparant son pays aux pays même les plus libres, ne se sentirait fier des institutions qui le protégent?

Quel est le Canadien qui, parcourant les rues de cette vieille cité et arrivant au monument élevé à deux pas d'ici, à la mémoire des deux braves morts sur le même champ de bataille en se disputant l'empire du Canada, ne se sentirait fier de son pays?

Dans quel autre pays, sous le soleil, trouverez-vous un monument semblable, élevé à la mémoire du vaincu aussi bien que du vainqueur? Dans quel autre pays, sous le soleil, trouverez-vous le nom du vaincu et du vainqueur honorés au même degré, occupant la même place dans le respect de la population?

Messieurs, lorsque dans cette dernière bataille que rappelle le monument de Wolfe et Montcalm, la mitraille semait la mort dans les rangs de l'armée

française, lorsque les vieux héros que la victoire avait tant de fois suivis, virent enfin la victoire leur échapper, lorsque, couchés sur le sol, sentant leur sang couler et leur vie s'éteindre, ils virent, comme conséquence de leur défaite, Québec aux mains de l'ennemi, et le pays à jamais perdu, sans doute leur pensée suprême dut se tourner sur leurs enfants, sur ceux qu'ils laissaient sans protection et sans défense; sans doute ils les virent persécutés, asservis, humiliés, et alors, il est permis de le croire, leur dernier soupir put s'exhaler dans un cri de désespoir. Mais si, d'un autre côté, le ciel permit que le voile de l'avenir se déchirât à leurs yeux mourants; si le ciel permit que leur regard, avant de se fermer pour jamais, pénétrât dans l'inconnu; s'ils purent voir leurs enfants libres et heureux, marchant le front haut dans toutes les sphères de la société; s'ils purent voir, dans la vieille cathédrale, le banc d'honneur des gouverneurs français occupé par un gouverneur français; s'ils purent voir les flèches des églises s'élançant de toutes les vallées, depuis les eaux de Gaspé jusqu'aux plaines de la Rivière Rouge; s'ils purent voir ce vieux drapeau, qui nous rappelle la plus belle de leurs victoires, promené triomphalement dans toutes nos cérémonies publiques; s'ils purent, enfin, voir nos libres institutions, n'est-il pas permis de croire que leur dernier soupir s'éteignit dans un murmure de reconnaissance pour le ciel, et qu'ils moururent consolés?

Si les ombres de ces héros planent encore sur cette vieille cité pour laquelle il sont morts, si leurs ombres planent ce soir sur la salle où nous sommes réunis, il nous est permis de croire à nous, libéraux, —du moins nous avons cette chère illusion,—que leurs sympathies sont toutes avec nous.

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